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CAPTAIN PLANCHET

Dumas

THE WORKS OF

ALEXANDRE DUMAS

IN THIRTY VOLUMES

THE PAGE OF THE DUKE OF SAVOY

VOLUME TWO

ILLUSTRATED WITH DRAWINGS ON WOOD BY EMINENT FRENCH AND AMERICAN ARTISTS

NEW YORK
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THE
PAGE OF THE DUKE OF SAVOY

THIRD PART

I

DOUBLE ADVANTAGE OF SPEAKING THE PICARD DIALECT

UNTIL now we have been entirely occupied with the besieged; it is time we spent a while under the tents of the besiegers, were it only to pay them a visit.

At the moment Coligny and that group of officers at present called the staff was making the tour of the walls in order to see what means of defence the city had, another group, not less important, was riding round it on the outside, in order to discover the best method of attack.

This group was composed of Emmanuel Philibert, Count Egmont, Count Horn, Count Schwartzburg, Count Mansfeld, and Dukes Eric and Ernest of Brunswick.

Among the other officers that formed a group behind the first, was our old friend Scianca-Ferro, troubling himself, as usual, about nothing except the life and honor of his beloved Emmanuel.

By the express order of Emmanuel, Leona had remained at Cambrai with the rest of the household of the duke.

The conclusion drawn from the examination was that the city, protected by miserable walls, and without either sufficient artillery or a sufficient garrison, could not hold out more than five or six days; such was the announcement made to Philip II., who had also remained at Cambrai, not by superior orders, but in obedience to the supreme dictates of prudence.

Six or seven leagues, for that matter, were all that sep-

arated the two cities; and if Emmanuel chose the abode of royalty for Leona, it was because, as he was obliged to communicate personally from time to time with Philip II. at Cambrai, the generalissimo of the Spanish army calculated that each of his journeys would give him an opportunity of seeing Leona.

Leona, on her side, had consented to this separation, first and above all, because in the life of devotion, love, and self-denial she had adopted, a wish of Emmanuel became for her a command; and next, because a distance of six or seven leagues, though it created a real absence, had no effect at all in parting her from her lover, since the young girl, whenever she had the slightest grounds for anxiety, could in an hour and a half be at the camp of Emmanuel Philibert, thanks to the freedom of action the ignorance of every one, except Scianca-Ferro, as to her sex gave her.

Moreover, whatever might be Emmanuel's joy at the renewal of hostilities—a renewal to which he had at least as much contributed by his attempts on Metz and Bordeaux as the admiral had by his attempt on Blois—he seemed to have grown ten years older. A young captain of hardly thirty-one years, he found himself at the head of an army charged with the invasion of France, commanding all those old leaders of Charles V. and staking his own fortune behind the fortune of Spain.

In fact, on the result of the campaign now undertaken would depend his future, not only as a great general, but as a sovereign prince; it was Piedmont which he was coming to conquer anew in France. Emmanuel Philibert, though he was commander-in-chief of the Spanish armies, was always, in truth, only a species of royal *condottiere*; now a man is really something in the balance of destiny only when he has the right of having men killed on his own account.

Nevertheless, he had not to complain; Philip II., obedient, at least in this, to the advice given him by his father Charles V. on descending from the throne, with regard to matters of peace and war, had bestowed full power on the

Duke of Savoy, and placed under his orders all that long list of princes and captains named by us when describing topographically the places occupied by each of them around the city.

All these thoughts, among which that of the responsibility weighing upon him was not the least, rendered Emmanuel Philibert as grave and as full of care as an old man.

He saw clearly that on the success of the siege of Saint-Quentin depended the success of the campaign. Saint-Quentin taken, there were only thirty leagues between that city and Paris, and Ham, La Fère and Soissons to be captured on the way; only it was necessary to carry Saint-Quentin speedily, in order not to give France time to collect one of those armies that almost always spring up from the earth for her, in virtue of a kind of enchantment, and which, as by a miracle, make of their breast a wall of flesh, to take the place of the walls of stone destroyed by the enemy.

And so we have seen with what persistent rapidity Emmanuel Philibert pressed forward the siege, and what a strict surveillance he had established around the city.

His first idea was that the weak side of Saint-Quentin was the Porte d'Isle, and that it would be there where, on the least opportunity offered by the imprudence of the besieged, he would carry the place.

Consequently, leaving all the other chiefs to pitch their tents in front of the Rémicourt wall, which, in case of a regular siege, offered the most favorable chance for a successful attack, as we have said already, he had his erected between a mill standing on the top of a little hill and the Somme.

From there he watched the river, over which he threw a bridge, and all that vast space extending from the Somme to the old causeway of Vermand—a space afterward to be filled by the camp of the English army, as soon as it joined the Spanish and Flemish army.

We have seen how the attempt to carry the faubourg by a surprise failed.

Emmanuel Philibert then decided to risk an escalade.

This escalade was to take place on the 7th or 8th of August during the night.

What motive had Emmanuel Philibert in selecting the night of the 7th or 8th of August for this enterprise rather than any other night? This is a question we intend to answer.

On the morning of the 6th, at the moment when he was listening to the reports made to him by the different officers of patrol, a peasant of the village of Savy was brought to him, who, moreover, expressed a wish to speak to him of his own accord.

Emmanuel, knowing that a military commander ought to disdain no information, had ordered that any one desiring to see him, no matter who, should be immediately introduced into his presence.

The peasant had only to wait, therefore, until the reports were finished.

He brought to the general of the Spanish army a letter which he had found in a military doublet.

As to the military doublet, he had found it under the bed of his wife.

This letter was a duplicate of the one written by the admiral to the constable.

This doublet was Maldent's.

Now, how came it that the doublet of Maldent was found under the bed of the village peasant's wife?

This is a circumstance which we feel bound to enter into fully, as the destinies of nations sometimes depend on these sorts of threads, lighter than the gossamers that fall from the distaff of the Virgin.

After Maldent had separated from Yvonnet, he pursued his journey.

On reaching Savy, he found himself at a corner of a street in presence of a night parol.

To fly was impossible; he had been seen. To fly would have at once created suspicion; besides, two or three horse-

men, by spurring their horses to a gallop, would easily have overtaken him.

He slipped into the doorway of a house.

"Who goes there?" cried a voice.

Maldent knew the customs of Picardy; he knew that the peasants very seldom bolted the doors of their houses. He pressed the latch; the latch gave way; the door opened.

"Is that you, my poor man?" asked a woman's voice.

"Yes; of course it is I," replied Maldent, who spoke the Picard *patois* in its purity, being a native of Noyon, one of the capitals of Picardy.

"Oh!" said the woman, "I thought you were dead!"

"Well," said Maldent, "you see I am not."

And, bolting the door, he approached the bed.

Quickly as Maldent had vanished into the house, a trooper had seen him, but without being able to tell exactly through what door he had disappeared.

Now as this man might be some spy following the patrol, the trooper, with three or four of his comrades, was already knocking at the neighboring door; and this diligence proved to Maldent that he had no time to lose.

But Maldent was badly acquainted with his surroundings. In his ignorance and flurry he fell violently against a table covered with pots and glasses.

"What's the matter?" asked the frightened wife.

"The matter is that I stumbled," said Maldent.

"You must be very old to be so stupid!" murmured the woman.

In spite of the little politeness of the observation, the adventurer contented himself with muttering a few words of tenderness between his teeth, and, while undressing, approached the bed.

He had no doubt they would soon knock at the door which had just opened for him, as they had done at the neighboring door, and he was determined that, if possible, they should not recognize him as a stranger in the house.

Now, the best way not to be recognized as a stranger in

the house was to occupy the place of the master of the house.

Maldent's experience in stripping others made it an easy thing for him to strip himself; in the turn of a hand, his garments were on the ground; he kicked them under the bed, raised the coverlet, and lay down.

But it was not enough for Maldent to be taken by strangers for the master of the house; it was further necessary that the shrewish female who had just rebuked him so sharply for his awkwardness should be convinced.

Maldent recommended his soul to God, and proceeded to convince his hostess that he was not dead, as she had believed, or rather pretended to believe.

It was a way of exhibiting his proofs, as M. d'Hosier would have said, which was very pleasing to the good dame; consequently, she was the first to complain of the annoyance when, after searching the neighboring house, occupied only by an old woman of sixty and a little girl of nine, the troopers, who were determined to find out the man of whom they had just got a glimpse, and who had been so prompt in disappearing, at last knocked at the house where Maldent had really entered.

"My God, Gosseu!" said the woman, "what's that?"

"Well," said Maldent to himself, "it seems my name is Gosseu. It is always good to learn."

Then to his hostess—

"What's that? Go and see for yourself."

"But, *zernidiu!* they will break in the door."

"Good! let them," replied Maldent.

And, without letting the soldiers trouble him, the adventurer continued the interrupted conversation; so that when the door gave way under the blows of the soldiers, nobody —and, for the time, the hostess less than any one—had the right of contesting with him the title of master of the house.

The soldiers entered swearing and cursing; but as they swore and cursed in Spanish and Maldent answered in Picard, the dialogue soon became so confused that the soldiers

judged it convenient to light a candle, in order that if they did not understand they might at least see one another.

It was the critical moment; so while the soldier was striking a light, Maldent judged it prudent to explain to his hostess in as few words as possible how matters stood.

It must be said to the honor of the latter that her first impulse was not to enter into the conspiracy.

"Ah," she cried, "you are not my poor Gosseu! Get out from here quickly, you big blackguard!"

"Good!" said Maldent; "I am Gosseu, since I am in his bed."

It seems the argument appeared conclusive to the hostess of Maldent, for she did not insist further; and, after having, by the glare of the candle which had just been lighted, cast a glance upon her improvised husband, she murmured—

"For every sin there is mercy! I must not wish the death of a sinner, as says the gospel of Our Lord!"

And she turned her nose toward the wall.

Maldent also took advantage of the light to cast a look around him.

He was in the house of a well-to-do peasant—oak table, walnut chest of drawers, serge curtains. On a chair was displayed a complete suit of Sunday clothes, all prepared, which the true Gosseu was to find on his return.

The soldiers, on their side, were looking on with eyes not less observant and quick; and as there was nothing to awaken their suspicions with respect to Maldent, they began to speak together in Spanish, but no longer threateningly—a fact which Maldent would have easily become cognizant of, even if he had not understood Spanish almost as well as he understood Picard.

The question discussed was the propriety of taking him for guide, the soldiers being afraid of going astray on the road between Savy and Dallon.

Seeing that he ran no other danger than this, and that this danger would even give him a splendid chance of escaping, Maldent took his share in the conversation.

"Come now, master soldiers," said he, "no need of letting your tongue sleep in your mouth. Tell me quickly what you want."

Then the leader, who spoke a little more French than the others, guessing Maldent's meaning, approached the bed and made him understand that what they wanted was for him to get up at once.

But Maldent shook his head.

"I cannot," he said.

"What! you cannot?" said the leader.

"No."

"And why no?"

"Because, while going to Bourbatrie, I fell on the way and injured my leg."

And Maldent imitated with his elbows and the upper part of his body the action of a man who limps.

"Good!" said the sergeant, "in that case you shall have a horse."

"Oh," said Maldent, "thanks! but I don't know how to ride a horse; now if it was a donkey—"

"Then you'll learn," said the sergeant.

"No, no, no!" said Maldent, shaking his head more and more energetically; "I will not mount a horse."

"Ah, you will not mount a horse!" said the Spaniard, approaching Maldent and raising his whip; "we'll see."

"I will mount a horse! I will mount a horse!" said Maldent, tumbling out of bed and jumping about on one foot, as if he could not put the other on the floor.

"Well and good!" said the Spaniard, "and now dress quickly."

"All right," said Maldent; "but don't shout so loud, or you'll waken my poor Catherine, who is in a fever from a terrible ache in her big tooth. Sleep, my poor Catherine, sleep."

And Maldent, all the time jumping on one foot, pulled the coverlet over the head of his Catherine, who had nothing better to do than pretend to sleep.

As to Maldent, he had his own idea in covering the head of Catherine; he had caught a glimpse of the glossy new clothes of Master Gosseu, and had formed the rather uncharitable design of appropriating them, instead of the extremely ragged regimentals which he had as a matter of precaution placed under the bed.

He found a double advantage in this substitution: he would have a new doublet and a new pair of breeches instead of an old doublet and an old pair of breeches, and would be dressed as a peasant, and not as a soldier, which would render the rest of his journey much safer.

He began then to put on the Sunday clothes of poor Gosseu with as much tranquillity as if their measure had been taken for himself, and as if he had paid for them out of his own purse.

It may easily be understood, for that matter, that Catherine paid little attention to what was passing; she now only wished for one thing, and that was that her false husband should get away as speedily as possible.

Maldent, on his side, who feared the appearance of the true Gosseu on the threshold at any moment, made the best speed he could.

Even the soldiers, who were in a hurry to reach Dallon, assisted Maldent in enduing himself with the vestments of Gosseu.

At the end of ten minutes the job was done. There was something miraculous in the perfect way in which the garments of Gosseu fitted Maldent. Once dressed, Maldent took the candle, under pretence of searching for his hat; but Maldent, stumbling against a seat, let the candle fall, and it was extinguished.

"Ah," he said, abusing himself, "there's nothing in the world more stupid than a peasant who has no sense!"

And as if for his own satisfaction, he added in a whisper—

"Except a soldier who thinks he has too much."

After which, in a tearful voice—

"Good-by, my poor Catherine," said he; "good-night. I'm off."

And, leaning on the arm of a soldier, the false Gosseu left limping.

At the door he found a horse ready. It was a terrible task to put Maldent on horseback; he cried aloud for a donkey—only a donkey. It took the united efforts of three soldiers to set him astride.

Once in the saddle, it was much worse. As soon as the horse threatened to trot, Maldent uttered lamentable cries, and hooked on piteously to the saddle-bows, pulling the reins back so strongly that the poor astounded horse did all he could, on his part, to get rid of so unpleasant a cavalier.

The result of all this was that the horse at the corner of a street took advantage of the fact that the sergeant had just dealt him a vigorous lash on the buttocks, and also of the fact that Maldent, at the same time, slackened the reins and dug the spurs into his sides, to set out at a headlong gallop.

Maldent called for help with all his might; but before help could reach him, horse and rider had completely vanished.

The comedy had been so well played that it was only when the noise even of the steps had died away that the Spaniards began to understand they had been duped by their guide, who, as we see, did not guide them long.

It was in this fashion Maldent arrived at La Fère, with a cavalry horse and a peasant's costume, and had narrowly escaped being imprisoned, hanged, broken on the wheel, in consequence of the anomaly existing between his mount and his garments.

Now it remains for us to explain how the letter of Coligny had fallen into the hands of Emmanuel Philibert; this explanation will neither be so scabrous nor take so long to narrate.

Two hours after the departure of the false Gosseu, the true Gosseu returned home; he found the village in revo-

lution and his wife in tears. Poor Catherine had related to everybody how a brigand had entered her house—all owing to her imprudence in not bolting the door because she was expecting her husband—and with pistol in hand had forced her to give up the clothes of Gosseu, of which, no doubt, the wretch had need, in order to escape the eye of justice; for the man capable of offering such violence to a poor woman could be nothing else but a great criminal. Thereupon, great as was the wrath of the true Gosseu at seeing himself so impudently deprived of his new clothes, he could not help consoling his wife when he saw her utter despair; then the happy thought came to him of searching the rags left in place of his brand-new Sunday clothes, as he might thereby perhaps find something which would aid him in his search for the infamous robber. And, in fact, he did find the letter addressed by the admiral to his uncle, M. de Montmorency, left by the adventurer, through forgetfulness, in his doublet; but for this forgetfulness the latter cared little, as he knew by heart and was ready to relate to the constable what it contained.

We have seen, however, that the absence of this letter was near being fatal to him.

The first idea of the true Gosseu, an honest man at bottom, had been to carry this letter to its address; but he reflected that, instead of punishing his robber, he would thus render him a service, since he would be doing the commissions the latter neglected to do, and hatred, that bad counsellor, whispered to him the inspiration to bring the letter to Emmanuel Philibert—that is to say, to the enemy of the constable.

In this fashion the messenger would not have the satisfaction of seeing his commission fulfilled; but, on the contrary, he would perhaps be whipped, imprisoned, put to death, as the constable would naturally suppose him to be a traitor.

We must do Gosseu the justice to say that he hesitated some time between the first impulse and the second; but,

as if he already knew the axiom which M. de Talleyrand was to formulate three centuries later, he struggled victoriously against his first impulse, which was good, and had the glory of yielding to his second, which was bad.

Consequently, as soon as it was daylight, despite the prayers of his wife, who was kind enough to implore mercy for the infamous rascal, the husband set out, saying—

"Come, come, Catherine, don't bother me any more about that knave. No, no, the thing is settled. It's in my head to see him hanged, and hanged he must be. Saint-Quentin, *tête de kien!*"

And, having made up his mind, the obstinate Picard kept to it, and brought the letter to Emmanuel Philibert, who, it is unnecessary to say, had no scruple in opening it, and saw there the itinerary traced by Coligny for the reinforcement which he begged the constable to send him.

Emmanuel Philibert liberally rewarded Gosseu, and dismissed him with a promise that he would be well avenged.

Nevertheless, as long as daylight lasted, the Duke of Savoy did not make any demonstration which would lead to the supposition that he suspected the project of the constable; but, rightly thinking that the admiral had not been content with despatching a single messenger to his uncle, and that the latter must have received at least two or three, he ordered fifty pioneers to start at nightfall, and cut wide ditches flanked by barricades on the Savy and Ham highways in the valleys of Raucourt and Saint-Phal.

Then he placed his best Spanish arquebusiers in ambush.

The night passed without anything unusual.

Emmanuel Philibert expected as much, for he supposed correctly that the constable would need time to make his dispositions, and that the *comedy*, as the admiral said, would be for the morrow.

Consequently, on the evening of the morrow, the Spanish arquebusiers were at their post. But it was not enough to prevent succors from reaching the city.

Emmanuel Philibert believed that, in order to favor the

entrance of the French into Saint-Quentin, all the garrison would be assembled at the Faubourg de Ponthoille, and that the other points would therefore be stripped; that the rampart of the Vieux-Marché particularly, not having been threatened by the fire of the Flemish batteries for the last two days, would be even more deserted than the others, and he ordered a surprise for the same night.

We have seen how chance, which had led Yvonnet thither, followed by the two Scharfensteins, on private business, frustrated this surprise.

But, as a compensation, at the same time that the surprise failed, the ambuscade succeeded, and cruelly for the poor besieged, from whom this success of the enemy took away the last hope. Three times did Dandelot, returning to the charge, try to break through the wall of fire which separated him from the city; three times was he repulsed, without the besieged, in the night, and ignorant of the dispositions made by the Duke of Savoy, daring to leave the city and bring him succor.

At last, decimated by the balls, the three or four thousand men led by Dandelot dispersed through the plain, and with only five or six hundred he rejoined the constable on the next day, the 8th of August, to whom he related his check, and who, after listening to him, snarling all the while, swore that, since the Spaniards forced him to it, he would teach them one of the tricks of an old soldier.

From that moment the constable decided, then, to carry, in person, and with his whole army—which, for that matter, was not a fifth of the Spanish army—succors to Saint-Quentin, both of men and provisions.

A terrible blow to the besieged the next morning was this double news—that of the surprise from which they had escaped, and that of the check suffered by the reinforcement which the brother of the admiral was bringing.

They were therefore reduced to their own resources, and we have seen what these resources were.

It was Maldent who, having received his discharge from

the very lips of Dandelot, with many eulogies on his conduct, managed to make his way through the country safely, and came now, at three in the morning, along the old causeway of Vermand, to knock at the Ponthoille gate.

The last words of Dandelot—words pronounced to be transmitted to his brother—were not to despair, and that, if the admiral thought of any other method of revictualling the city, he could point it out to him by Maldent.

It was a promise, but a promise too vague for one to rest any hope whatever on it. Coligny therefore believed it better, when explaining, the next day, the very serious situation in which they were to the mayor and aldermen, not to say a single word of this promise.

The bourgeois, as Coligny says, in his Memoirs, "began by being a little astonished." But they were soon of one mind; and the admiral was able, seconded by them, to adopt new measures.

Many poor people of the neighborhood, from fear of pillage—an exercise in which the Spaniards had the reputation of excelling—had, as we have said, taken refuge in the city, transporting thither their most precious possessions. Among the number of those who thus sought the hospitality of Saint-Quentin were two lords of noble house, and accustomed to war—the sires of Caulaincourt and Amerval.

Coligny summoned them, and requested each to plant his banner on the square of the Town Hall, and to enroll all who would present themselves, promising to each recruit a crown, and a quarter in advance.

The two gentlemen accepted; they planted each his banner, and at the end of four or five hours they had enrolled two hundred and twenty men, who, Coligny himself confesses, were "well enough armed, and well trained for the place."

The admiral reviewed them the same evening, and ordered the gratuity as well as the quarter in advance to be handed to them.

Then, as he thought the time was come for having

recourse to measures of rigor, and as the scanty supply of provisions in the city compelled him to remove from it all useless mouths, he published, by sound of trumpet, that all men and women who were strangers in Saint-Quentin, and all who had taken refuge there from the surrounding villages, would have to enroll themselves for work at the repairing of the fortifications, under penalty of being whipped at the crossways the first time they were found in fault, and hanged the second. "If they liked it better," added the proclamation, "they might assemble an hour before nightfall at the Ham gate, which would be opened, in order to let them withdraw."

Unfortunately for these poor people, the greater part of whom preferred withdrawal to labor, drums were heard beating and trumpets sounding during the day, and a new army, clad in blue, was perceived advancing from the direction of Cambrai.

It was the English army, twelve thousand strong, which was coming to join that of the Duke of Savoy, and to occupy the ground prepared for it; two hours after, it completed the blockade of the city, masking its fourth side, and extending from the Faubourg d'Isle to Florimont.

The three generals commanding it were Pembroke, Clinson and Gray.

It dragged in its train twenty-five pieces of cannon, and thus possessed an artillery double that which the admiral had been forced to scatter over the whole circumference of the ramparts of the city.

From the top of the walls the inhabitants saw with consternation this third army which had come to join the two others; but the admiral passed through the crowd saying:

"Come now, brave people of Saint-Quentin, courage! You cannot believe that I have come among you and have led with me so many good men for the pleasure of destroying myself and destroying them as well? Now, though we had to depend on ourselves alone, your constancy helping,

I hold, on the faith of Coligny, the garrison sufficient to defend us against our enemies."

And behind him heads were proudly raised, eyes shone, and the most downcast said to one another:

"Courage, then! Nothing can happen worse to us than to M. l'Amiral, and, since M. l'Amiral answers for everything, let us rely on his word."

But it was not so with the poor peasants in the city, who, not wishing to run the risk of working under the fire of the enemy, had prepared to leave: the arrival of the English army had closed the gates on them; and, between two perils, many decided to confront that which the labor of repairing the walls entailed.

The others persisted in their desire to quit the city, and were put outside of the Ham gate. They were more than seven hundred.

During twenty-four hours these unfortunates remained lying in the ditches, not daring to venture through the English or Spanish army; but hunger forced them to it, and, on the evening of the second day they advanced, two by two, with head bent and hands clasped, toward the lines of the enemy.

It was a terrible spectacle for those in the city to see these unfortunates, surrounded like a flock of sheep by the English or Spanish soldiers, driven into the camp by blows of pike-handles, and vainly beseeching mercy.

Everybody around the admiral was weeping.

"But," says the latter, "it was a relief so far, for I should have either to support them or let them die of hunger."

During the evening Coligny took counsel with the good people of Saint-Quentin. The question, now that the city was completely blockaded, was to find a passage by which the constable could make a new attempt to aid them. The passage of the Somme through the marshes of Grosnard was settled on.

These marshes were very dangerous, on account of their

swamps and morasses; but hunters accustomed to these marshes, which were judged impracticable, declared that, if they were given fifty men loaded with fascines, they would attempt, that very night, to construct a passage a dozen feet in width, forming a causeway in the middle of the marshes, and reaching to the Somme. As to the left bank, there was no difficulty: it was practicable.

The admiral added Maldent to the workmen; he gave him a letter for his uncle. In this letter he drew for the constable a plan of the localities, pointing out, so that he might not make any mistake, the point where the landing should take place; only he recommended him to have a supply of flat-bottomed boats, as he himself possessed but four cots in a condition to be of any use, and the biggest of these four would scarcely hold four men.

If the causeway was made during the night, Maldent was to swim across the Somme and make his way to the constable. If an answer was urgent, he was to bring it back in the same fashion.

At two in the morning hunters and workmen returned, saying that a road was traced, on which six men could confidently walk abreast.

The work had been done without any difficulty, the engineers who had sounded these marshes for the Duke of Savoy having reported to him that it would be madness for any body of troops whatever to venture there.

Maldent had swum across the river, and made directly for La Fère through the plains.

Everything was going on, on this side, as well as possible, then; it was a weak hope, it is true, but they could only hope it would grow stronger through faith in the Lord.

At daybreak the admiral was on the platform of the Collegiate. It was the morning of the 9th. From that elevated point he commanded the triple camp of the enemy, and saw all the works of the besiegers.

It was twenty-four hours since Coligny had mounted to his observatory, and since then the Spaniards had made

terrible progress; the great heaps of fresh earth rising on the Rémicourt side told that their pioneers were at work.

The admiral sent at once for an excellent English miner, named Lauxfort, and asked him what he thought of the works executed by the enemy. The latter was of opinion that these works denoted the beginning of a mine; but he reassured the admiral when he told him that, by good luck, he himself had already, two or three days ago, begun to countermine so opportunely that he could promise to give a good account of this work which so disturbed the admiral.

But at the very time they were constructing these mines, the Spaniards were busy with another work quite as disturbing: they were digging their trenches, and these trenches were approaching the city—slowly, it is true, but without there being any chance of opposing their progress.

These trenches were three in number; all three menaced the Rémicourt rampart, toward which they were advancing in zigzag fashion—one in front of the Tour à l'Eau, the second in front of the Porte de Rémicourt, the third in front of the Tour Rouge.

The admiral could make no efficacious opposition to these trenches; he had not men enough to make sorties and destroy them, nor arquebusiers to support these sorties and protect the retreat; but, as we have seen, he had, with the new recruits, scarcely six or seven hundred men, and, when all arms were collected, there were only forty arquebuses; so that, as he says himself, he had not "any means of obstructing these works, for which he was very sorry!"

All, then, the admiral could do was to repair, well or ill, as far as he could manage, according as the Spaniards destroyed.

But soon these repairs themselves became impossible. On the 9th a new battery was heard thundering; and this battery, raised on the platform of the abbey of Saint-Quentin-en-Isle, and taking the rampart of Rémicourt obliquely from the Tour à l'Eau to the Tour Rouge, hardly permitted any more repairs, for no workman dared

to venture in that direction. However, as these repairs became the more urgent in proportion as the ravages of the enemy's artillery became more considerable, the admiral began to employ the stick; but, seeing that this means, so efficacious in other circumstances, was insufficient in the present one, a list of pioneers was drawn up, to whom a promise of excellent food and a crown a day was made. This "double dainty," as the admiral says, persuaded a hundred workmen to enroll themselves.

Maldent, on his side, arrived safe and sound at La Fère; and as soon as the constable knew of his nephew's distressful condition, and the works executed across the marshes, which would enable him to succor him, he resolved to visit himself the places without delay.

Consequently, an hour after the arrival of Maldent at La Fère, he set out at the head of two thousand cavalry and four thousand infantry, and marched to Essigny-le-Grand, where he stopped.

There, after forming his army in battle array, he sent three officers forward to study the position of the Spaniards, and the distance which separated their advance posts from the city and river; then he himself, with his most experienced captains, advanced behind them, as near as possible to the marshes of the Somme; that is to say, to the village of Gruois.

The three French officers sent to reconnoitre were able to reach the Abbiette by turning a post of Spanish arquebusiers; then, having examined the marshes of Gauchy and sounded the approaches to the Somme, they returned to the constable, confirming all that Maldent had said.

At the same moment the latter received a letter from the constable, informing Coligny that his whole occupation now ought to be to try to hold out for a day or two, and that the succors asked for might reach him at any moment.

The admiral was recommended to keep a good watch, so that when these succors did arrive they might not be kept waiting outside the walls.

In consequence of this, and as, in any case, the reinforcement must arrive from the direction of Tourival, the admiral doubled the posts on this side, and had a good number of ladders carried under the sheds of the powder magazine, in order that those arriving might enter at the same time by the Sainte-Catherine postern and mount up to the walls.

The constable joined his army at Essigny-le-Grand almost at the same moment that Maldent re-entered the city.

The resolution of the constable was to succor Saint-Quentin openly, and in full daylight. Darkness and artifice had so badly seconded the enterprise the first time that he appealed to those two great auxiliaries of courage—the light of the sun and open force.

The constable then returned to La Fère, gathered together his infantry, cavalry, artillery, consisting of fifteen pieces of cannon, and ordered Maréchal de Saint-André, who was at Ham, to come and join him on the 10th of August, at an early hour, on the road from La Fère to Saint-Quentin.

After delivering his message to Coligny, Maldent returned straight to the tent of the adventurers. He found each at his post; every countenance was wreathed with smiles. Yvonnet's affairs were succeeding marvellously. Fracasso had abandoned the infinitive of the verb *perdre* for its past participle *perdu*, and had found a rhyme for it immediately, *pendu*. The two Scharfensteins had created a little business for themselves, which was doing remarkably well: they made nocturnal sorties, and lay in ambush on the passages communicating with the two camps; then, with a great flail of their own invention, reaching a distance of twelve feet, they waited for the passers-by, who received on the nape of the neck a blow dealt either by Franz or Heinrich, and fell down, it is easily understood, without uttering a syllable. Now, as the Spaniards and Flemings had just received their back pay, as well as the gratuity given on beginning a campaign, the two giants dragged toward them the dead or senseless man, and despoiled him. If he was dead, well, he did not awaken; if he was only unconscious,

he awoke, trussed like a sausage, with a gag in his mouth, having beside him three or four companions trussed and gagged like himself. Then, when it was time to go to bed, the two Scharfensteins hoisted their three or four prisoners on their shoulders; and, poor as the ransoms might be, our Germans, who were men of order, poured all into the common treasury of the society. Procope continued to exercise his functions as notary and attorney *in partibus*; he could not attend to all the wills he was asked to draw up; so he doubled his price, and now made none under six livres. Lactance was gradually passing the contents of the cellar of the Jacobins, reputed the best in the neighborhood, under the tent of the adventurers. Pilletrousse was constantly returning with purses which he claimed to have picked up when out riding, and with cloaks which he asserted he had found on certain posts in the city. Money affairs, as well as love affairs, were doing finely; gold was flowing in from all quarters, and, although in little streams, it promised at last to make so mighty a river that, should the war only last a year or two longer, each of our adventurers could retire with an honest fortune, and follow in peace and amid universal respect his natural *penchant*, whether that led him to love or poetry.

A smile was on every lip, except, however, let it be said, on that of poor Malemort.

Malemort was groaning lamentably; never were such groans heard. It was not that anything was the matter with him, but the contrary; for Malemort, according to the precept of Socrates, *Γνωθι σεαυτόν* (know thyself), had made a study, not psychological, but anatomical, of himself. He knew himself thoroughly; he felt a decisive affair was coming on; and though his flesh knit so quickly, he saw clearly it would be quite impossible for him to play his part in it, and thus manage to appropriate a new gash or wound of some sort.

Maldent, on announcing confidentially the near arrival of the constable, put the climax to the despair of his companion.

It was the supper hour; the adventurers sat down to table. Thanks to the thousand resources of their imagination, this table was certainly better furnished than that of the admiral. The wine particularly, supplied, as we have said, by Brother Lactance, was at once abundant and delicious. Everybody, therefore, drank to every other body's health, and there were many other toasts besides.

They drank first in honor of the return of Maldent, in honor of the sonnet of Fracasso, which had turned out a success, then to the health of Malemort, to the health of the king, to the health of the admiral, to the health of Mademoiselle Gudule; then, in fine, and let us say that this was an afterthought of Maldent, to the health of poor Catherine Gosseu.

The only ones who had not so far proposed a health were the two Scharfensteins, who had not much readiness in elocution, although they had drunk much more than all the seven others together.

But, at last, Heinrich arose, a full glass in his hand, his mouth smiling under his thick mustache, and his eyes twinkling under his wide eyebrows.

"Companions," said he, "I propose a health."

"Silence, gentlemen!" cried the adventurers; "Heinrich proposes a health!"

"And I, too," said Franz.

"And Franz, too!" cried the adventurers.

"Yes!"

"What health is it, Franz? Speak first; it is your right, for you are the youngest."

"The health which my uncle will propose."

"Ah, bravo!" cried the adventurers: "a respectful nephew, as always. Well, Heinrich, the health!"

"I propose," said Heinrich, "the health of that virtuous young man who offered us five hundred crowns for that little affair you know of—"

And he went through a somewhat vulgar pantomime, imitating a man killing a hare.

"Ah! yes," said Yvonnet, "the bastard of Waldeck. Good! we have not seen him since; he did not leave us an earnest, nor did he say on what day we were to belong to him."

"No matter," said Heinrich; "he has pledged his word, and a German has only his word. He is sure to come; he will give us an earnest and appoint a day."

"Thank you for answering for me, Heinrich!" said a voice at the door of the tent.

The adventurers turned round.

"Gentlemen," said the bastard of Waldeck, advancing, "here are the hundred crowns of gold which I promised you as earnest; and you belong to me body and soul during the whole of to-morrow, or rather to-day, for it is one o'clock in the morning."

Then he threw a hundred crowns of gold on the table, and, taking the glass which, to his great regret, Malemort had left full—

"Now, gentlemen," said he, "let us do honor to the toast of the brave Heinrich. Let us drink to the success of *the little affair!*"

And the adventurers drank joyously to the success of the little affair, which was nothing less than the murder of Emmanuel Philibert.

II

THE BATTLE OF SAINT-LAURENT

LET us return to the constable.

The same day—for, as the bastard of Waldeck had judiciously observed, the first hour of the day of the 10th of August, 1557, had just struck at the moment he was proposing his toast—the same day, toward seven in the morning, the troops of Maréchal de Saint-André, coming from Ham under the conduct of Comte de la Rochefoucauld, made their junction with those of the constable.

The two armies, or rather the two fractions of an army thus united, formed an effective force of nine hundred gendarmes, a thousand light horse and arquebusiers on horseback, fifteen French companies, and twenty-two German companies of infantry; total, nine or ten thousand men.[1]

It was at the head of this small force that the constable was about to attack an army which numbered, since its junction with the English division, nearly sixty thousand men!

Therefore, in the council held in the evening, when he declared his intention of marching with an army of ten thousand men to the aid of a city besieged by sixty thousand, Maréchal de Saint-André pointed out to him the danger of such an enterprise, and what he had to fear from an enemy so active as the Duke of Savoy during a retreat of six leagues through plains which offered no shelter.

But, with his ordinary politeness, the admiral replied: "*Corbleu!* monsieur, you may leave to me the part of

[1] Eleven thousand, according to Rabutin; eight thousand, according to Mergey, who was present at the battle, and taken prisoner there.

doing what is proper for the good of the state. I learned long ago when and how to give or avoid battle; don't disturb yourself, therefore, about the issue."

The constable had set out during the night. He expected to be at the mill of Gauchy at four in the morning; he did not arrive until ten, his march having been delayed by the baggage and cannon.

The Duke of Savoy was, on his side, so badly served by his spies that he was surprised by the French army, which appeared suddenly on the heights of Gauchy.

The constable had time even to make prisoners of two companies numbering six hundred men, and occupying the advanced posts.

Arrived there, the French army found itself face to face with the Spanish army; but the Somme and the marsh of Abbiette extended between the two armies, which had no means of coming together except a causeway situated at the bottom of the Spanish camp, and over which four men at most could pass abreast.

After all we have said in connection with the siege, two words will suffice to make known the position of the constable, and render palpable the faults he committed on that fatal day.

All the Spanish, Flemish, and English army occupied the right bank of the Somme.

The fourteen companies of Julian Romeron and Carondelet, besides the two companies surprised by the constable, occupied, respectively, the Faubourg d'Isle and the mill of Gauchy, faubourg and mill being on the left bank of the Somme.

Now, once Montmorency had arrived at the mill of Gauchy, once the two companies were captured, there remained a very simple manœuvre to be executed; it was to blockade in the faubourg the fourteen companies of the two Spanish captains, to plant a battery of six pieces in front of the causeway, the only passage practicable for the enemy, to send quietly as many men as was necessary to Saint-Quentin,

and then to retire when the city was revictualled, sacrificing two of the six pieces of cannon, and a hundred men, who would have to continue firing on the causeway, and who would be sufficient to guard the passage.

The constable captured the two companies, blockaded the fourteen companies in the faubourg, and neglected entirely the causeway; he ordered the fourteen boats he had brought with him to be launched on the Somme, in accordance with the notification from the besieged that they possessed only three or four little cots.

But then it was seen that, instead of being placed at the head of the column, the carts drawing the boats had been placed at the tail.

Two hours were lost in bringing them up; an hour lost in pushing them to the border of the Somme; then, when the boats were launched, the soldiers threw themselves into them with so much eagerness that, being overloaded, they grounded on the sands of the pond of the Abbiette.

During this time, one of the archers, taken prisoner in the morning, at the mill of Gauchy, pointed out to the constable the tent of the Duke of Savoy.

The constable at once erected a battery aimed at that tent.

At the end of ten minutes the battery fired; and it could be seen by the movement around the tent that the bullets had not been lost. However, the boats, which had at last been successfully placed on the water, began to sail up the Somme. Certain resinous materials were burned on them, making a great smoke; this was the signal agreed on between the constable and Coligny.

At the first shout which denoted the appearance of the constable, Coligny had run up to the curtain of Tourival, from which he commanded all the country as far as the mill of Gauchy. He therefore saw in the distance the boats which were advancing, loaded with men; he immediately ordered a sortie by the postern of Sainte-Catherine—a sortie intended to support the landing—while he had ladders let

down and placed against the walls, in order to give every facility to the men, however numerous they might be, for entering the city.

He had just made these dispositions, following with his eyes the smoke of the boats, which were drawing more and more near, when Procope approached him, and, appealing to the contract made between the admiral and the adventurers, requested leave for the day, as it was the intention of the adventurers to engage in a private enterprise.

It was the very letter of the treaty. . The admiral had, therefore, no reason, but, furthermore, no right to oppose this fancy. Perfect freedom of action was, then, given to Procope and his companions.

So they followed the men ordered for the sortie, and were soon outside the city.

The bastard of Waldeck, armed from top to toe, and with the visor of his helmet lowered, was at their head.

The horse of Yvonnet, the two horses of Maldent, and a fourth horse, furnished by the bastard of Waldeck, formed the cavalry. This cavalry was composed of Yvonnet, Maldent, Procope, and Lactance.

Pilletrousse, Fracasso, and the two Scharfensteins formed the infantry.

However, it was intended that Pilletrousse and Fracasso should ride behind Yvonnet and Lactance, if the road was too long for their comfort. There was no cause for anxiety with regard to the two Scharfensteins, who were never fatigued, and could easily keep up with a horse galloping.

Poor Malemort alone was, as we see, absent from the expedition; but he was unfit to proceed either on foot or horseback, and was left behind to guard the tent.

The adventurers made for the bridge, where the boats were to land.

These boats soon, indeed, touched the shore, but the same hurry and disorder that marked their departure marked their arrival. Without paying any attention to the words or signals of those whom the admiral had sent

to supervise the disembarkation, and point out the road to follow on the improvised causeway through the marshes, the soldiers jumped out, sinking in the mud up to the waist; then, being excited by this accident, amid a frightful tumult which prevented any advice from being heard, they pushed one another, some to the right, others to the left, one party wandering into the morasses, the other in the direction of the enemy's camp.

Dandelot alone, with four hundred of his men, followed pretty closely the line traced by the fascines, and reached firm ground.

From the top of the rampart Coligny saw with dismay the reinforcement that had been so long expected diminished, and likely to be lost entirely, shouting vainly to those men who were struggling by hundreds in the morasses into which their obstinacy had hurled them, and where they gradually disappeared without any one being able to bring them aid.

However, Dandelot, after rallying some of his men, who had gone astray, or were in peril, arrived at the postern with five hundred soldiers and fifteen or sixteen captains—to whom must be added a few gentlemen, "come there for their pleasure," as Coligny says.

These gentlemen were the Vicomte du Mont-Nôtre-Dame, the Sieur de la Curée, the Sieur Matas, and the Sieur de Saint-Rémy; a commissary of artillery and three cannoneers followed them.

After the sight of his brother, who arrived, all dripping from the waters of the Somme, Coligny confesses that the sight of these three cannoneers was the one which gave him the most pleasure, his only gunners being bourgeois gunners, who, despite their courage, were very far from being, owing to their lack of dexterity and experience, equal to the needs of a besieged city, and especially of a city besieged in such a formidable fashion.

The bastard of Waldeck waited quietly with the adventurers until the soldiers were disembarked, floundering, or

lost in the morasses; then he took one of their boats, and, followed by his eight men, he descended the river and rowed to a little grove of elms extending, like a curtain of silver, to one of the ends of the pond of the Abbiette.

Arrived there, he gave to each a Spanish scarf, and asked nothing of them except to keep quietly under cover, and be ready to obey the first order they received from him.

His plan was easy to understand. He had learned, the evening before, of the intention of the constable to lead his army in person, and revictual Saint-Quentin. Knowing the Duke of Savoy as he did, he judged correctly that at the sight of the French army, Emmanuel Philibert would not remain behind his lines, but, on the contrary, would spring forth and give battle on the left bank of the Somme. This was why he was lying in ambush in the marshes of the Abbiette, in the neighborhood of which, in his opinion, the battle must be fought; and he had distributed red and yellow scarfs among the adventurers—at this period there were no regular uniforms—in order that they might be taken for Spanish scouts, and so be able to approach and surround Emmanuel Philibert without exciting any suspicion.

Emmanuel Philibert once surrounded, we know what the bastard of Waldeck intended to do with him. We are about to see whether he was deceived in his anticipations.

Emmanuel Philibert had just left table when the presence of the French army on the other side of the Somme was announced to him; his tent was pitched on an eminence, so that he had only to go out and turn toward La Fère, to see the whole French army in battle array on the heights of the Abbiette. Then, lowering his eyes, he saw beneath him, but beyond reach of an arquebuse, the landing of Dandelot and his men; at the same time, one of those hissing sounds which never deceive a soldier made itself heard above his head, followed by two or three similar ones, and a ball entered the earth at his feet, covering him with sand and pebbles.

Emmanuel Philibert took a step forward, in order to reach a point from which he could inspect the whole course of the Somme; but at the moment that he was marching, so to speak, to face the fire, he felt the grasp of a vigorous hand on his arm, and was pulled back.

It was the hand of Scianca-Ferro.

At that moment a ball passed clear through the tent, from end to end.

To remain longer at this point, become visibly the target of the constable's artillery, was to expose one's self to certain death. Emmanuel Philibert, while giving the order to bring him his arms and saddle his horse, gained a little chapel, mounted the platform of the belfry, and from there could see that the whole French army did not extend further than Saint-Lazare, and that this village was unguarded save by an inconsiderable body of cavalry.

These observations made, he descended rapidly, armed himself under the porch even of the little chapel, summoned Counts Egmont and Horn, and sent a messenger to Duke Eric of Brunswick and Count Mansfeld, ordering them to reconnoitre the French, and see especially whether the causeway of Rouvroy was threatened by any battery, open or masked, and appointed a rendezvous at the quarters of Field-Marshal de Benincourt.

A quarter of an hour after, he was himself at the rendezvous. He had gone round half of the city, passing by Florimont and the road called to-day the Ruelle d'Enfer—which abutted on the line of circumvallation, beginning at Saint-Pierre-au-Canal, and ending at the Faubourg Saint-Jean.

The scouts of the Duke of Brunswick and Count Mansfeld had already returned: the causeway of Rouvroy was perfectly free, and the extreme point of the French army did not reach La Neuville.

Emmanuel Philibert at once ordered two thousand men to mount their horses, put himself at their head, was the first to cross the causeway of Rouvroy, directed his two

thousand horse to pass on behind him, and then formed them in battle array, in order that they might protect the infantry.

Then, according as his troops debouched, he made them file on Mesnil by Harly, hiding them, by means of this circuit, from the sight of the French army.

More than fifteen thousand men had already passed while the constable was amusing himself by firing on the empty tent of Emmanuel Philibert.

Suddenly the Duc de Nevers, sent by the constable with the companies of gendarmes and the Curton and Aubigné companies to explore the plain of La Neuville, discovered, on reaching an elevation, all the dispositions of the Spanish army.

An immense column of the enemy, protected by the two thousand horse of the Duke of Savoy, was advancing on the other side of Harly, and was gradually coming into view—a dense and gloomy mass, behind the Mesnil-Saint-Laurent, already inclosing the army of the constable within a semicircle.

The Duc de Nevers, weak as was the troop he commanded, had for a moment the idea of sending word to the constable that he was going to sacrifice his life and that of all his men, in order to give the French army time to retreat; but the constable had forbidden him to come to an engagement, under penalty of his head: it would have been disobedience to orders, and he knew how rigorous the constable was in matters of military discipline. He did not dare to take on himself the responsibility of such an act; he fell back on a corps of light cavalry commanded by the Prince de Condé, which was stationed at the mill of Gratte-Panse, on the road of Le Mesnil, and, putting his horse to a gallop, went to inform the constable of what had happened.

The constable immediately summoned M. de Saint-André, Comte de la Rochefoucauld, the Duc d'Enghien, and his principal officers, and explained to them that, satisfied with having introduced into Saint-Quentin the succors demanded

by his nephew, he judged it right to make as honorable, but as speedy a retreat as possible. He therefore called on each corps commander to take charge of his division, form his men, and retire in the same order in which he himself would, avoiding every engagement which was not forced on him.

But the constable, so zealous in recommending strategic precautions to others, did not himself adopt the simple one of placing a hundred arquebusiers in ambush in each of the windmills situated beside Urvilliers, Essigny-le-Grand, and what is to-day called La Manufacture, in order to break the front of the enemy and occupy it by their fire.

The French infantry took the head of the retreating army; it advanced at a quick step, but yet in good order, toward the woods of Jussy, which alone could offer it a cover against the charges of the cavalry.

But it was too late: when it was at a spot from which it would still require three-quarters of an hour to reach the woods, the squadrons and battalions of the Spanish army appeared within five hundred paces of the French army, forming a vast circle around it.

The two hostile forces confronted each other.

The constable halted, placed his cannons in battery, and waited. The numerical superiority of the enemy's cavalry left no hope of reaching the wood.

Thereupon Emmanuel Philibert divided his army into three great corps, gave Count Egmont the command of the right wing, Dukes Ernest and Eric of Brunswick that of the left, explained his plan, and offered his hand to them, received their promise not to undertake anything without his orders, and took the command of the centre.

Between the French and Spanish armies there was a mass of sutlers, servants without masters, *goujats*, as they were then called—all that wretched multitude, in fact, which fastened like vermin on the armies of the period.

Emmanuel Philibert ordered some cannon-shot to be fired upon this rabble.

The effect was what he expected: terror seized them; a thousand men and women rushed, shrieking, into the ranks of the soldiers of the constable.

An effort was made to drive them back; but terror is sometimes more powerful than courage.

Rising on his spurs, Emmanuel Philibert saw the confusion this irruption caused in the French ranks.

Then, turning to Scianca-Ferro, he said—

"Let Count Egmont fall on the French rearguard with all his Flemish cavalry. It is time!"

Scianca was off like a flash of lightning.

Then, to Duke Ernest, who was near him—

"Duke," said Emmanuel, "while Egmont charges the rearguard with his Flemish cavalry, do you and your brother take each two thousand arquebusiers on horseback, and attack the head of the column. The centre is my affair."

Duke Ernest set out at a gallop.

Emmanuel Philibert followed his two messengers with his eyes; and, seeing each arrive at his destination, seeing that the movement ordered by him had begun, he drew his sword, raised it above his head, and said—

"Sound, trumpets; it is the hour!"

The Duc de Nevers, who commanded the extreme left of the French army, was ordered to resist the attack of Count Egmont. Taken in the flank by the Flemish cavalry at the moment he was crossing the valley of Grugies, he turned round and faced the enemy with his companies of gendarmes; but two catastrophes interfered with his defence: a flood of those sutlers which had rolled along the whole centre of the army, driven back from rank to rank, appeared on the top of the hills, and descended like an avalanche, rushing between the legs of the horses, while, at the same time, a company of English light horse in the pay of France turned rein, joined the Flemish cavalry, with which it returned immediately to charge the gendarmes of the Duc de Nevers, and that in so furious a fashion that

it pursued the bulk of our cavalry into the valley of the Oise, where it had retreated.

While this was going on, despite the efforts of the Duc de Nevers, who did wonders on that day, the left wing was beginning to be thrown into disorder; for Dukes Eric and Ernest of Brunswick, in pursuance of the order given to one and transmitted to the other, attacked the head of the French column the moment it left Essigny-le-Grand, and appeared on the causeway of Gibercourt.

But, as it had not had to deal with the irruption of the sutlers and the treason of the English light horse, it held its ground, continued its march, repulsing the arquebusiers on horseback, and gave time to the constable and the bulk of the army—which had extended its lines in its passage across Essigny-le-Grand—to concentrate in the midst of the vast plain extending between Essigny-le-Grand, Montescourt-Lizeroles and Gibercourt.

There, feeling he could go no further, the constable stopped a second time, like the boar brought to bay, who decides to make head against the dogs; and, all the time saying his *Pater-Nosters*, he formed his army in a square, and placed his cannon in battery.

It was his second halt; he was entirely surrounded; it was necessary to conquer or die.

The old soldier did not fear to die; he hoped to conquer.

And, indeed, the old French infantry, on which the constable reckoned, showed itself worthy of its reputation, sustaining the shock of the entire hostile army; while, at the mere advance of the latter, the Germans in our pay threw down their pikes, and raised their hands to beg for quarter.

The Duc d'Enghien, on his side, young, and full of ardor, ran to the assistance of the Duc de Nevers with his light cavalry; he found him unhorsed for the second time, but getting into the saddle, in spite of a pistol-shot which had gone through his thigh. It was the first pistol-shot he received; before the end of the day he was to have a second.

However, the constable held firm. As his infantry was

repulsing the charges of the Flemish cavalry with incredible intrepidity, Emmanuel Philibert brought up cannon to demolish these living ramparts.

Ten pieces thundered at once, and began to make a breach in the army.

Then the Duke of Savoy placed himself at the head of a squadron of cavalry, and charged like a simple captain.

The shock was profound and decisive; the constable, surrounded on all sides, defended himself with the courage of despair, saying, according to his habit, his *Pater*, and giving, with each phrase of this *Pater*, a thrust that overturned a man.

Emmanuel Philibert saw him from afar, recognized him, and galloped up, shouting—

"Take him alive! it is the constable!"

It was time; Montmorency had just received a wound from a pike-thrust under the left arm, through which his blood and strength were escaping. The Baron of Batenburg and Scianca-Ferro, who had heard the cry of Emmanuel, rushed forward, made a rampart of their bodies for the constable, and drew him out of the *mêlée*, calling on him to surrender, as resistance was useless.

But the constable, as a sign that he surrendered, gave up only his poniard; to the Duke of Savoy alone, he said, would he surrender his sword.

It was because this *fleur-de-lis* sword was the sword of the Constable of France.

Emmanuel Philibert advanced quickly, and, making himself known, received the sword from the hand of Montmorency himself.

The battle was won by the Duke of Savoy, but it was not over; fighting continued until nightfall. Many refused to surrender, and were killed.

Of this number were Jean de Bourbon, Duc d'Enghien —who, after having had two horses killed under him, was shot through the body while trying to deliver the constable

—François de la Tour, Vicomte de Turenne, and eight hundred gentlemen who lay on the field of battle.

The principal prisoners besides the constable were the Ducs de Montpensier and Longueville, Maréchal de Saint-André, the Rheingrave, Baron de Curton, Comte de Villiers, bastard of Savoy, the Duke of Mantua's brother, the Seigneur de Montbron, son of the constable, Comte de la Rochefoucauld, the Duc de Bouillon, Comte de la Roche-Guyon, and the Seigneurs of Lansac, Estrées, Roche du Maine, Chaudenier, Poudormy, Vassé, Aubigné, Rochefort, Brian and La Chapelle.

The Duc de Nevers, the Prince de Condé, the Comte de Sancerre, and the eldest son of the constable retreated to La Fère.

The Sieur de Bordillon joined them there, bringing with him the only two pieces of cannon which had escaped the great defeat, in which France, out of an army of eleven thousand men, had six thousand killed, three thousand taken prisoners, and lost three hundred war chariots, sixty flags, fifty standards, and all the baggage, tents and provisions.

There were not ten thousand men left to close the road to the capital against the enemy.

Emmanuel Philibert ordered his troops to withdraw to their camp.

Night came; and Emmanuel Philibert, meditating not, without doubt, on what he had done, but on what he had yet to do, accompanied by only a few officers, was following the causeway leading from Essigny to Saint-Lazare, when eight or ten men, half on foot and half on horseback, issued from the mill of Gauchy, and slipped gradually between the gentlemen of his escort.

For some time the whole party proceeded in silence; but suddenly, when they were passing close to a little wood whose projecting shadow increased the darkness, the horse of the Duke of Savoy gave utterance to a doleful neigh, started aside, and fell down.

Thereupon was heard a noise like the clash of steel against steel; then in the shadow there was a cry, the more terrible that it was pronounced in a low voice—

"Down with Duke Emmanuel!"

But scarcely were these words uttered, scarcely was there time to guess whether the fall of the horse was natural or not, or whether its rider ran any real danger, when a man, overturning all before him, striking friends and foes with his battle-mace, hurried into the middle of this sombre and almost invisible tragedy, crying—

"Hold your ground, brother Emmanuel; I am here!"

Emmanuel did not need the encouragement of Scianca-Ferro; he was holding his ground indeed, for, prostrate though he was, he had seized one of his assailants, and, holding him on top of himself, made a sort of buckler of him.

The horse, on the other hand, although it had one of the hind legs cut, as if it felt the necessity of defending its master, kicked out vigorously with the three legs remaining, and with one of those kicks overturned one of the unknown spectres that had suddenly started up around the conqueror of the day.

During all the time Scianca-Ferro, while striking right and left, was crying—

"Help the duke, gentlemen! help the duke!"

It was useless. All the gentlemen of the escort had drawn their swords, and every one plunged, striking at random, into the *mêlée*, where but one cry was heard, "Kill! kill!" and where none knew who was killed, or who killed.

At last the gallop of a score of horsemen was heard, and, by the reflection of the flame on the trees, it was seen that they carried torches.

At this sight and sound, two men on horseback hurried out of the conflict, and fled across the fields, without any one dreaming of pursuing them.

Two men on foot threw themselves into the wood, and no one tried to follow them either.

All resistance was over.

At the end of some seconds, twenty torches threw their glare over the field of battle.

Scianca-Ferro's first care was to see to the duke.

Emmanuel, if he was wounded, had only received a few slight wounds; the man he had held between his arms received most of the blows intended for him, and was truly his shield.

This man seemed completely unconscious—a circumstance which was due to the fact that Scianca-Ferro had dealt him a blow with his mace on the back of the head.

As to the three other men stretched on the ground, and who seemed dead or very ill, nobody knew them.

The one seized by the duke bore a helmet with a visor, and this visor was lowered.

The ear pieces were unlaced and the helmet taken off, and the pale countenance of a young man of from twenty-four to twenty-five was exposed to view.

His red hair and red beard were covered with the blood which flowed at once from his mouth and nose, as well as from a contusion he had received at the back of the head.

In spite of his paleness, in spite of the blood which covered him, Emmanuel Philibert and Scianca-Ferro recognized, doubtless both at the same time, the wounded man, for they exchanged a rapid glance.

"Ah!" murmured Scianca-Ferro, "it is you, then, serpent!"

Then, turning to the duke—

"You see, Emmanuel," said he, "he is only unconscious. What if I finish him?"

But Emmanuel raised his hand in sign of command and silence; and, dragging the young man himself from the hands of Scianca-Ferro, he drew him to the other side of the ditch bordering the road, planted him against a tree, and placed his helmet near him.

Then, mounting his horse, he said—

"Gentlemen, it is for God alone to judge what has taken

place between me and that man, and you see that God is on my side!"

But, seeing that Scianca-Ferro was grumbling and looking at the wounded man with an angry shake of his head—

"Brother," he said, "I entreat you. The father was enough."

Then to the others—

"Gentlemen, I desire that the battle fought on this day, the 10th of August, and so glorious for the Spanish and Flemish armies, be called the battle of Saint-Laurent, in memory of the day on which it was given."

And they returned to the camp, discoursing on the battle, but without saying a single word of the skirmish that followed it.

III

HOW THE ADMIRAL HAD NEWS OF THE BATTLE

GOD had just declared once more against France, or rather—if we sound the mysteries of Providence more deeply than do ordinary historians—God prepared by Pavia and Saint-Quentin the way for the work of Richelieu, just as, by Poitiers, Crécy, and Agincourt, he had prepared the way for the work of Louis XI.

Then perhaps he also wished to give an example of a great kingdom lost by the nobility and saved by the people.

However this may be, the blow was terrible, and made a cruel wound in the heart of France, at the same time that it delighted our great enemy, Philip II.

The battle was fought on the 10th; it was only on the 12th that the King of Spain was reassured enough against all that nobility sleeping on the plains of Gibercourt to venture on a visit to Emmanuel Philibert in his camp.

The Duke of Savoy, who had given up to the English all that undulating ground lying between the Somme and the chapel of Epargnemaille, returned to pitch his tent in front of the rampart of Rémicourt, the point where he resolved to continue the works of the siege, if, contrary to all expectation, Saint-Quentin, on learning that the battle was lost—and lost under such frightful conditions—did not surrender.

This second encampment—placed on a little hillock between the river and the tents of Comte de Mégue—was the nearest to the ramparts, and was scarcely the two-thirds of the distance a cannon-shot would carry from the city.

Philip II., after taking an escort of a thousand men at Cambrai, and after informing Emmanuel Philibert of his coming, in order that the latter might double or treble the escort, if he judged it necessary, by troops sent from the camp, arrived before Saint-Quentin on the 12th at eleven o'clock in the morning.

Emmanuel Philibert awaited him at the borders of the camp. There he assisted the King of Spain in getting off his horse, and, according to the etiquette established between even a prince and a king, wished to kiss his hand.

"No, cousin," said Philip; "no, I ought rather to kiss yours—to kiss the hand of one who has just won me a victory, so great, so glorious, and which has cost us so little blood!"

In fact—according to the chroniclers who have described this curious battle—the Spaniards lost only sixty-five men, and the Flemings fifteen.

As for the English army, it did not require to take any part at all in the conflict, and looked quietly on from its encampment while our defeat was being accomplished.

As we have said, this defeat was frightful; the dead bodies covered all the plain between Essigny, Montescourt-Lizeroles, and Gibercourt.

It was a piteous spectacle, which a worthy Christian woman had not been able to see without emotion. Catherine de Laillier, mother of the Sieur Louis Varlet, Seigneur of Gibercourt and mayor of Saint-Quentin, had a field named the Vieux-Moustier blessed and consecrated, in which she caused immense ditches to be dug and all the bodies to be brought there and buried.

From that time the name of the Vieux-Moustier was changed to that of *Cimetière le Piteux.*[1]

While this worthy lady was accomplishing her pious task, Emmanuel Philibert was counting his prisoners; we have said how numerous they were.

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[1] Charles Gomart, "Siège et Bataille de Saint-Quentin."

King Philip passed them in review; then the monarch and his suite retired to the tent of Emmanuel Philibert. The French standards taken during the battle were set up along the trenches, and cannon were fired in the Spanish and English camps in sign of rejoicing.

Philip II. looked on at these rejoicings from the threshhold of the tent of the Duke of Savoy.

He summoned Emmanuel, who was talking with the constable and Comte de la Rochefoucauld.

"Cousin," said he, "you have, no doubt, some motive besides that of rejoicing in making all this noise?"

And as at this moment the royal standard of Spain was being planted over the tent in which was Philip II.—

"Yes, sire," answered Emmanuel, "I reckon on the enemy, seeing they have no further chance of relief, surrendering without forcing us to make an assault, and so allowing us to march on Paris and arrive there at the same time as the news of the defeat of Saint-Laurent; and as to this standard we are raising, it is to inform M. de Coligny and M. Dandelot, his brother, that your Majesty is in the camp, and to make him the more desirous of surrendering, knowing that he may hope more from your royal clemency than from any other person."

But as the Duke of Savoy finished these words, in response to all the joyous discharges of artillery which enveloped the city in a cloud of smoke, a single flash shone, a single detonation was heard from the ramparts, and a ball passed, hissing, three feet above the head of Philip II.

Philip turned fearfully pale.

"What is that?" he asked.

"Sire," said the constable, laughing, "it is a sort of flag of truce which my nephew sends you."

Philip did not question further; on the very instant he gave orders to have a tent erected for him somewhere beyond the reach of the French cannon; and on arriving at that tent, he made a vow, in thanksgiving for his escape, to build in honor of Saint-Laurent, as a testimony of the evi-

dent protection he had bestowed on the Spaniards on the 10th, the finest monastery that ever had been built.

This vow resulted in the construction of the Escurial, that gloomy and magnificent pile, altogether significant of the genius of its author, presenting in its entirety the form of a gridiron, the instrument of the martyrdom of Saint-Laurent; a gigantic mass of buildings, at which three hundred workmen labored for twenty-two years, on which thirty-three millions of livres were expended—a sum equivalent at present to a hundred millions—through which the light penetrates by eleven thousand windows, and into which a person may enter by fourteen thousand doors, the keys of which weigh five hundred tons.[1]

While Philip was having his tent pitched outside the range of the cannon-balls, let us see what was passing in the city, which was not yet ready to surrender, at least, if Coligny's *flag of truce* was to be trusted.

The admiral had heard the cannon thundering all the day in the direction of Gibercourt, but he was ignorant of the issue of the battle. So, when he retired to rest, he gave orders that anybody coming from outside with news should be immediately introduced to him.

About one in the morning, he was awakened; three men had just presented themselves at the Sainte-Catherine postern, saying they could give details on the battle.

The admiral bade them enter immediately; they were Yvonnet and the two Scharfensteins.

The two Scharfensteins could not say much: we know that elocutionary fluency was not their principal merit; but this was not the case with Yvonnet.

The young adventurer told all he knew—that is to say, that the battle was lost, and that a great number had been killed and taken prisoners; he was ignorant of the names,

[1] We know the reply of a Gascon gentleman to whom the monastery was shown in all its details, and who was asked what he thought of this monument. "I think," he said, "that his Majesty Philip II. must have been in a terrible fright to make such a vow!"

but thought he heard the Spaniards say the constable was wounded and a prisoner. However, there would be more news from Proeope and Maldent, who must have escaped.

The admiral asked Yvonnet why he and his companions, who formed part of the garrison, engaged in the battle; to which Yvonnet replied that he believed it was in accordance with a right reserved to them by Proeope in the treaty they had made with the admiral.

Not only had the right been reserved, but the admiral was aware of the fact; it was, then, through pure interest in the adventurers that he asked the question. Moreover, there was no doubt as to the share they had taken in the action. Yvonnet carried his left arm in a scarf; it had been pierced by a dagger. Heinrich Scharfenstein had his face cut in two by a sabre-stroke; and Franz was limping, having received a kick from a horse that would have broken the leg of an elephant or a rhinoceros, and which produced on his a grave contusion.

The admiral recommended the three adventurers to keep the secret; he wished the city to learn as late as possible of the defeat of the constable.

Yvonnet and the two Scharfensteins returned to their tent, where they found Malemort a prey to a frightful nightmare; he was dreaming that there was a fight, that he saw the battle, and that, sunk up to his waist in a marsh, he could not manage to extricate himself so as to take part in it.

It was not quite a dream, as we know; so when his three companions awoke him, his groans, instead of diminishing, redoubled. He insisted on knowing all the details of the ambuscade which had turned out so badly, and at every detail which would have made another person desire to be a hundred leagues away from such a *mêlee*, he repeated sadly—

"And I was not there!"

At five in the evening, Maldent also reappeared. He had remained unconscious on the field of battle; he was supposed to be dead; he revived after a time, and, thanks

to his knowledge of the Picard *patois*, succeeded in escaping.

Brought before the admiral, he had nothing further to tell him more than had been told already by Yvonnet, except that he lay concealed a part of the day in the reeds of the pond of the Abbiette.

Pilletrousse arrived during the following night. Pilletrousse was one of those who had thrown themselves into the wood, and whom no one had the idea of pursuing.

Pilletrousse knew Spanish almost as well as Maldent knew Picard. Thanks to his red and yellow scarf and his pure Castilian, at daybreak Pilletrousse united with a Spanish band charged by Emmanuel Philibert to search among the dead for M. de Nevers, who had so often and so dangerously exposed himself that it could not be believed he survived the terrible day. Pilletrousse and the Spanish detachment spent the whole day on the field of battle, turning over the dead in the sad hope of finding the Duc de Nevers among them. It is needless to say that one who would turn over the dead would also search his pockets; so that Pilletrousse had not only accomplished a pious task, but did a good business; he returned without a contusion, and with his pockets full.

According to the orders given, he was led before the admiral, to whom he furnished the most circumstantial details on the dead and on the living, having all these details from his companions in the search for Nevers.

It was therefore through Pilletrousse that Coligny learned the death of the Duc d'Enghien and of Vicomte de Turenne, also of the capture of the constable, his son, Gabriel de Montmorency, Comte de la Rochefoucauld, and all those noble gentlemen we have named.

The admiral cautioned him to be more discreet even than the others, and dismissed him with the announcement that four of his companions had returned.

The Jacobin fathers were notified about daybreak that two peasants of Gruois were bringing back one of their

brothers dead. The corpse was nailed down in its coffin, over which was spread the shirt of steel—a substitute for a hair shirt—which the good man lately wore next his skin.

The Spaniards had stopped the bearers on their way five or six times; but each time the latter made them understand what a pious mission they were fulfilling in bringing back to the convent of the Jacobins the body of a poor monk, who had died in the exercise of his religious functions, and the Spaniards always made the sign of the cross and let them pass.

The orders of the admiral had been to bring him the living, and not the dead; the corpse was therefore transported directly to the convent of the Jacobins, where it was laid in the middle of the chapel.

And as the worthy brothers surrounded the bier, asking one another anxiously who could be its tenant, a voice was heard issuing from the coffin and saying—

"It is I, my dear brethren—I, your unworthy captain, Brother Lactance. Let me out quickly, for I'm stifled."

They were not mistaken. Brother Lactance rose, went and knelt down before the altar, said his prayer of thanksgiving, and related that, after an unlucky expedition, he found an asylum with certain brave peasants; the latter, however, feared a visit from the Spaniards, and then God inspired him with the idea of getting himself nailed down in a coffin and brought to the city as if dead.

The stratagem was the easier because it was in the house of a carpenter he found a refuge.

We have seen that the stratagem was perfectly successful.

The good fathers, who were delighted to see their worthy captain back again, did not bargain about the price of the coffin or the pay of the bearers; they gave a crown for the bier and two crowns to the latter, who requested Brother Lactance to choose them, in preference to all others, should he take it into his head to get buried again.

It was Brother Lactance who, not having received any warning from the admiral, told of the constable's defeat; the news spread through the convent, and from the convent reached the city.

Toward eleven in the morning, Maitre Procope appeared before the admiral, who was standing on the rampart near the Tour à l'Eau.

Maitre Procope had been the last to arrive; but this was not the fault of the worthy lawyer. He had done his best, and arrived with a letter from the constable.

How did Maitre Procope come by this letter from the constable? We are going to explain.

Maitre Procope had presented himself quite simply at the Spanish camp, as a poor devil of a reiter who was in the service of M. le Connétable, as furbisher of his arms.

He asked to be permitted to join his master; the request was so modest that it was at once granted.

Maitre Procope was shown the lodgings assigned to the constable, and Maitre Procope at once went thither.

A glance made the constable understand he had something to say to him.

The constable answered by another glance, and, by dint of growling, cursing, and swearing, at last succeeded in banishing all who were present.

Then when he was alone with Procope—

"Come now, you rascal," he said, "I have seen you had something to tell me. Out with it speedily, and be quick and plain, or I'll give you up to the Duke of Savoy as a spy, who'll have you hanged, for sure."

Thereupon Procope had related a whole history to the constable—a history very creditable, indeed, to the high character of Procope.

The admiral, who had every confidence in him, had despatched him to his uncle to gain tidings of the latter; and Procope, to reach M. le Connétable, had adopted the pretext we have mentioned.

The constable might then charge him (Procope) with a

reply, written or verbal, for his nephew; he would find a way to get into the city—that was his lookout.

The only reply M. de Montmorency could give his nephew was to hold out as long as possible.

"Give me that advice in writing," said Procope.

"But, brigand!" said the constable, "if you are taken with such a message on you, do you know what will happen to you?"

"I shall be hanged," answered Procope, quietly; "but do not be alarmed, I have no intention at present of letting myself be hanged."

Reflecting that, after all, it was Procope's affair whether he was hanged or not, and that he could find no better way of giving news to the admiral, the constable wrote a letter, which Procope took the precaution of hiding inside the lining of his doublet.

Then, while all the time polishing furiously the helmet, cuirass, armlets, and thigh-pieces of the constable's armor, which had never shone so brilliantly as since it came into the hands of Procope, the latter awaited a favorable opportunity for returning to the city.

On the morning of the 12th, the opportunity presented itself. Philip II. arrived in camp, as we have said already, and the excitement was so great on the occasion that no one thought of paying any attention to so insignificant a person as the furbisher of M. le Connétable.

The furbisher of M. le Connétable therefore succeeded in making his escape, seconded in his flight by the smoke of the cannon fired in sign of rejoicing, and he had come and knocked coolly at the Rémicourt gate, which was opened for him.

The admiral—we have said so before—was on the rampart, near the Tour à l'Eau, a point from which he commanded the entire Spanish camp.

He was drawn thither by the great noise and the great festival of which the camp was evidently the scene, he himself being ignorant of the cause of noise and festival.

Procope explained the situation, handed him the constable's letter, and pointed out the tent of Emmanuel Philibert.

Then he added that this tent had been prepared for the reception of Philip II.; and the admiral could not doubt as to the truth of this assertion when he saw the royal Spanish standard waving above it.

Furthermore, Procope, whose eyes were as keen as an attorney's ought to be, declared that a man clad in black, standing on the threshold of the same tent, was King Philip II.

It was then that Coligny formed the idea of answering all this noise and smoke by firing a single cannon-shot. Procope asked leave to point the cannon. Coligny did not think he could well refuse so trivial a request to the man who brought him a letter from his uncle.

Procope aimed the cannon as best he could; and if the ball passed three feet above the head of Philip, it was certainly the fault of the adventurer's eyes, not of his will.

However this may be, the constable, as we have seen, recognized the answer of Coligny, who, convinced that Procope had done all he could, ordered ten crowns to be counted out to him for his trouble.

Procope joined his companions about one o'clock, or rather a part of his companions; namely, Yvonnet, the two Scharfensteins, Maldent, Pilletrousse, Lactance, and Malemort.

As to the poet Fracasso, vainly did they expect him; he did not reappear. Certain peasants, questioned by Procope, declared they had seen a dead body hanging from a tree, just at the spot where the skirmish on the evening of the 10th had occurred, and Procope came to the judicious conclusion that this body was that of Fracasso.

Poor Fracasso! his rhyme had brought him ill-luck.

IV

THE ASSAULT

FROM the moment that the victory of Saint-Laurent and the presence of Philip II. before Saint-Quentin did not bring about the surrender of the city; from the moment when, instead of surrendering, Coligny, without respect for the royal Majesty, forced Philip II. to beat a retreat, by sending an impertinent cannon-ball to hiss in his royal ears—it became evident the city was determined to hold out to the last extremity.

It was therefore resolved to press on the siege unremittingly.

It was now ten days since the siege had begun; it was a good deal of time already to waste before such wretched walls. It was necessary to make an end of the matter, once for all, and teach a lesson to those stubborn and impudent burghers who dared to still hold out when they had lost all hope of being succored, and could only look forward to seeing their city carried by storm, and all the woes such an event ordinarily entails.

The precautions taken by Coligny to prevent the news of the defeat of the constable reaching the people of Saint-Quentin was useless: the news spread through the city; but, strange to say, and the admiral himself vouches for the fact, it had more influence on the soldiers than on the bourgeois.

However, the great difficulty of the admiral—a difficulty which, as we have seen, troubled him from the beginning—was to find workmen to repair the ravages made by the cannon. These ravages bore particularly hard on the rampart of Rémicourt; and since the arrival of the English

army, which had sent a dozen pieces of artillery to Carondelet and Julian Romeron, the rampart was no longer tenable. In fact, two batteries had been established—one, as we have said, on the platform of the abbey of Saint-Quentin-en-Isle, and the second on the heights of the faubourg. These two batteries plowed the Rémicourt rampart along its whole length, from the Porte d'Isle to the Tour Rouge; so that the workmen, unprotected from head to foot, and exposed to the double fire of the English and Spanish batteries, no longer dared to approach the rampart, which threatened to fall to pieces one fine morning from end to end.

It was Dandelot who got rid of this danger.

He hit on the idea of having all the old boats on the Somme transported on the rampart, and made into traverses.

The work commenced one evening at nightfall.

Franz and Heinrich, covered each with a boat as with an immense hat, undertook this rough task. According as a boat was placed crosswise on the rampart, pioneers filled it with earth.

Five boats were disposed of in this fashion during one night; they were filled with earth and afforded a shelter to the workmen.

Then the soldiers appeared again on the boulevard, and the workmen resumed their task.

During this time, two new covered roads had been begun by the besiegers, the first in the direction of the Tour à l'Eau, the second close to the mill of the Rémicourt curtain.

The admiral had the streets unpaved, the paving stones carried to the towers, and those paving stones thrown into the trenches, in order to disturb the Spanish pioneers; but the gabions which masked the miners protected them, in great part, from the action of these projectiles, and allowed them to continue their work of destruction.

Philip II., in order to excite the Spanish cannoneers to fix their batteries, came sometimes to visit them when at

work; but, one day when he was looking on, the admiral recognized him, and calling his most skilful arquebusiers, pointed out the royal target at which they must fire. The very next moment, a hail of bullets whistled around the king, who, for fear of accidents, had brought his confessor with him, in order to have always within reach an absolution *in extremis*.

At the noise made by those bullets, Philip II. turned toward the monk.

"Father," he said, "what do you think of that music?"

"I think it's anything but pleasant, sire," answered the monk, shaking his head.

"Such is also my opinion," said Philip. "I find it hard to understand how my father Charles V. could take so much pleasure in it. Let us go away."

And, in fact, the king and his confessor went away, never to return.

However, the completion of these works took nine days; they were nine days gained for the King of France, who doubtless was not wasting the time which the admiral and the brave people of his city of Saint-Quentin were gaining for him.

At last, on the 21st, the batteries were unmasked, and on the 22d they began to play. It was only then that the people of Saint-Quentin were able to judge of the danger which menaced them. During these nine days, Philip brought from Cambrai all the artillery it could supply; so that the entire space between the Tour à l'Eau and the Tour Saint-Jean formed only one immense battery of fifty pieces of cannon, battering a line of walls of about a thousand metres.

On the other side, the Flemish batteries of the Ruelle d'Enfer had resumed their fire, battering the curtains of the Vieux-Marché and the Dameuse guardhouse.

The English batteries were separated into two parts, one of which aided the Spanish batteries of Carondelet and Julian Romeron, while the other, under the orders of Lord

Pembroke, sent their balls into the Faubourg de Ponthoille and against the Tour Sainte-Catherine, from the heights of Saint-Prix.

Saint-Quentin was completely enveloped in a cirele of fire.

Unfortunately, the old walls fronting Rémieourt, the point attacked with most fury, were only covered with a facing of sandstone, and could offer but a feeble resistance.

At each fresh salvo of artillery, the entire wall trembled, and it looked as if it would fall to pieces along its entire length, separating from the rampart as if it were the crust of a gigantic *pâté*.

From this moment, the scene around the city resembled the eruption of an immense volcano. Saint-Quentin seemed a salamander of ancient times inclosed within a circle of flame: every ball took away a portion of the wall or shook a house to pieces; the Isle and Rémicourt quarters presented the appearance of one vast ruin. At first, it was attempted to prop and support the houses; but scarcely was one house propped up when the neighboring house, toppling over, brought down house and props with it. The inhabitants of these devastated quarters withdrew, according as their houses were destroyed, and fled to the Saint-Thomas quarter, which was least of all exposed to the fire; and such is the love of property that they only abandoned their crumbling walls when they saw them just about to fall, and some, reluctant to leave, stayed so long that they were buried in the ruins.

And yet not a voice was raised from the midst of this desolation, from the centre of these ruins, to speak of surrender. Each was convinced of the sanctity of his mission, and seemed to be saying to himself, "We shall all fall—city, houses, ramparts, citizens, and soldiers; but, by falling, we will save France!"

This tempest of fire, this iron hurricane, lasted from the 22d to the 26th of August. On the 26th the Flemish, Eng-

lish, and Spanish cannon had hollowed out eleven breaches in the rampart, and all were practicable.

Suddenly, about two in the afternoon, the batteries of the enemy, evidently by common agreement, were silent. A silence of death succeeded the frightful detonations, which had never ceased for the last ninety-six hours, and the besiegers were seen to approach in a crowd along the covered paths.

It was believed the time for storming the city had arrived.

Just after this, a cannon-ball set fire to the huts near the convent of the Jacobins, and an attempt was being made to extinguish it, when suddenly the cry, "To arms!" resounded through the city.

Coligny ran up; he called on the inhabitants to let their houses burn and defend the ramparts.

The inhabitants, without a murmur, abandoned the buckets and pumps, and, taking pikes and arquebuses, hastened to the walls. The women and children stayed behind and saw their dwellings burn.

It was a false alarm; the assault was not to take place on that day. The besiegers were approaching to fire the mines made under the scarps. Doubtless they did not find the ascent sufficiently practicable. The mines were fired, adding new breaches to the first, new ruins to the old, and then the besiegers withdrew.

During this time, the conflagration, abandoned to itself, had devoured thirty houses.

The evening and night were employed in repairing the breaches at the points attacked, and establishing new parapets on the walls.

As to our adventurers, thanks to their legist Procope, their dispositions were made with as much loyalty as discernment.

The common fund was composed of four hundred crowns of gold. This gave to each, in consequence of the death of Fracasso and the inheritance derived thereby, exactly fifty

crowns. Each took twenty-five for himself, and left the rest in the treasury, which was placed in the cellars of the convent of the Jacobins, after which all took an oath not to lay hands on this reserved fund for a year, and then only in presence of the survivors. Each might dispose of the twenty-five crowns in his possession according to his good pleasure. It was well understood that the part of those who should die in the interval would belong to the survivors. Malemort, who had less prospect of escape than the others, hid his twenty-five crowns, wisely thinking that, if he kept them on him, they would be lost.

On the morrow of the 27th, at daybreak, the cannon renewed its thunders, and the breaches, which had been nearly repaired during the night, became again practicable.

We have said that there were eleven principal ones.

We shall now describe their position, and in what consisted their means of defence. The first, made in the Porte Saint-Jean, was guarded by Comte de Breuil, governor of the city. The second was guarded by the Scotch company of the Earl of Aran; these Scotch were the gayest and most laborious soldiers of the garrison. The third, opened in the Tour de la Couture, was guarded by the Company of the Dauphin, of which M. de Théligny was formerly lieutenant; this company had for commander M. de Cuisieux, his successor. The fourth, which gutted the Tour Rouge, was guarded by the company of Captain Saint-André and by Lactance and his Jacobins: the Tour Rouge was only fifty steps from the convent of the Jacobins. The fifth, in front of the governor's palace, was guarded by Coligny himself with his company; he had near him Yvonnet, Procope, and Maldent. The sixth, opened in the tower on the left of the Porte de Rémicourt, was guarded by half the company of the admiral under the command of Captain Rambouillet; Pilletrousse, who had friends in this company, had got himself incorporated in it. The seventh was guarded by Captain de Jarnac, of whom we have already said a few words; he was very ill, but, ill as he was, he had himself

carried to this breach on the morning of the 27th, where, lying on a mattress, he awaited the assault. The eighth, which gave access to the Tour Sainte-Périne, was guarded by three captains whom we have not yet had an opportunity of naming, and who were called Forces, Oger, and Soleil; a fourth, the Sieur de Vaulpergues, had joined them; they commanded soldiers of different arms. The ninth was guarded by Dandelot, with thirty-five men-at-arms and twenty-five or thirty arquebusiers. The tenth, opened in the Tour à l'Eau, was defended by Captain de Lignières and his company. In fine, the eleventh, in the Tour d'Isle, was guarded by Captain Sallavert and the La Fayette company, which the two Scharfensteins and Malemort had joined; they had only to take about thirty steps from their tent to reach the breach.

All these warriors, divided among the different breaches, numbered eight hundred men.

As we have said, the cannon began to roar at daybreak on the 27th, and did not stop for a second until two in the afternoon. It was useless to answer such a fire, which pulverized the ramparts, crumbled the houses, and struck the inhabitants even in the most remote streets. To wait, therefore, was the only policy possible; but, in order that no man capable of bearing arms might be left in doubt as to the necessity of his co-operation, the watchman on the belfry never ceased ringing from daybreak, only interrupting himself occasionally to cry out through a speaking-trumpet from the top of the tower—

"To arms, citizens! to arms!"

And at the sound of this bell, and at these cries incessantly repeated, the weakest became strong, the most timid took courage.

At two o'clock the fire ceased, and a flag was hoisted by Emmanuel Philibert on the salient of the covered road.

It was the signal of assault.

Three columns were directed on three points—one on

the convent of the Jacobins, one on the Tour à l'Eau, and the third on the Porte d'Isle.

These three columns were thus composed: that which marched toward the convent of the Jacobins, of the old Spanish bands led by Alonzo de Cazières, and of fifteen hundred Germans under the orders of their Colonel Lazare Swendy; that which marched on the Tour à l'Eau reckoned six Spanish battalions, commanded by Colonel Navarez, and six hundred Walloons under Comte de Mégue; finally, that which marched on the Porte d'Isle was led by Captain Carondelet and Julian Romeron. They had under their orders three Burgundy companies and two thousand English.

It would be impossible to measure, short though it was, the time which elapsed between the moment when the besiegers rushed from the trenches, and that when they were engaged hand to hand with the besieged; in such a case, men live years in the course of a minute.

The shock occurred on the three points threatened. On these three points, nothing was seen for a quarter of an hour but the confusion of a frightful conflict; nothing heard but cries, groans, and blasphemies; then, hanging for a moment on the edges of the crumbling ramparts, the tide which had mounted fell back repulsed, leaving the talus covered with dead.

Every one had done wonders; the three points attacked with fury were defended with desperation. Lactance and his Jacobins were at their best. The enemy were hurled down from the Tour Rouge even into the fosses; but more than twenty monks lay among the dead, with the old Spanish soldiers of Alonzo de Cazières and the Germans of Swendy. The Walloons of Comte de Mégue and the Spaniards of Navarez had not been more successful; and, forced to retreat even to the trenches, they were forming again for a second assault. Finally, at the tower of the Porte d'Isle, the presence of Malemort and the two Scharfensteins worked wonders. Carondelet had his arm shat-

tered by a pistol-shot fired by Malemort; and Julian Romeron, overturned by a blow from the mace of Heinrich Scharfenstein and thrown down from the top of the ramparts, had both his legs broken in the fall.

For a moment there was a halt along the entire line. They were taking time to breathe. But the tolling of the bell still made itself heard, and at intervals the voice of the watchman cried at the four corners of the tower—

"To arms, citizens! to arms!"

It was not a vain cry, for, as we have said, the storming columns were again forming, and, having received a reinforcement, were returning to the attack by the same road, strewed with dead, which they had already traversed.

What made this defence sublime was that all, leaders, soldiers, and citizens, knew it was useless and could not have a successful result; but there was a great duty to be fulfilled, and each fulfilled it, gravely, sacredly, and nobly.

Nothing more gloomy and more terrible—Coligny himself says so—than this second attack, accompanied neither by flourish of trumpet nor roll of drum. Besiegers and besieged approached each other silently, and the only sound heard was that of steel clashing against steel.

The breach which he defended not being attacked, Coligny could follow with his eyes the chances of the struggle, and go where he judged his presence necessary; he saw a part of a Spanish company who had dislodged the arquebusiers of the Tour Rouge, and profiting by this advantage, advanced to the parapet, and were slipping in, one by one, into the tower itself.

Coligny was not at first disturbed by this attack: the road taken by the Spaniards was so narrow and difficult that if the Company of the Dauphin did its duty the besiegers must certainly be repulsed; but to the great astonishment of Coligny, the Spaniards were succeeding one another on the same road, without their march being apparently disturbed.

Suddenly a frightened soldier came to announce to the admiral that the breach in the Tour Rouge was forced.

It was impossible for Coligny, on account of a boat filled with earth which rose between him and the Tour Rouge, to see what was passing at this point; but, understanding that the most urgent thing for him to do was to run where he was told the enemy was victorious, he summoned five or six men and descended from the rampart, which he reckoned on mounting again at the other side of the traverse, crying—

"Follow me, my friends; it is here we must face death!"

But he was not half-way when he saw, behind the platform of the windmill, the ensign of the Company of the Dauphin flying in the direction of the Jacobins with other soldiers, while monks and bourgeois were letting themselves be killed rather than recoil a step.

Coligny thought his presence was so much the more urgent at the Tour Rouge as the soldiers were abandoning it, and he redoubled his speed.

But at the moment he was ascending the rampart, he saw that the rampart was taken, and that he had strayed into the midst of the Spanish and German attacking column, already master, not only of the breach, but of the wall.

The admiral looked around him; a single page, almost a child, followed him with a gentleman and a *valet de chambre.*

At the same moment, two men attacked him, one with a sword, while the other was adjusting his arquebuse.

The admiral parried the thrusts of the sword with his mailed arm, and, by the help of the pike which he held in his hand, thrust aside the arquebuse, which fired in the air.

At this juncture the little page, frightened, cried out in Spanish:

"Do not kill M. l'Amiral! do not kill M. l'Amiral!"

"Are you really the admiral?" asked the soldier who had attacked him with his sword.

"If he is the admiral, he is mine," broke in the man with the arquebuse, and he tried to lay his hand on the admiral.

But Coligny, striking the hand aside with the handle of his pike, said—

"You need not touch me; I surrender, and, with God's help, I shall find such a sum for my ransom that you will both be contented."

Then the two soldiers exchanged a few words in a low voice which the admiral could not hear, and which were doubtless a compact, for they ceased disputing and asked him if the men with him were his, and who were they.

"One is my page, the other my valet, the third a gentleman of my household," replied the admiral. "Their ransom will be paid with mine; but take me out of the way of the Germans; I do not wish to have anything to do with them."

"Follow us," said the two soldiers, "and we will put you in a place of safety."

And, having asked the admiral for his sword, they led him to the breach, which had not yet been scaled, and, helping him to descend, conducted him to the fosse at the entrance of a mine.

There they met Alonzo de Cazières, with whom the soldiers exchanged a few words.

Don Alonzo approached Coligny and saluted him courteously; then, pointing to a group of gentlemen who were issuing from the trench and advancing toward the wall, forming the suite of the generalissimo of the Spanish army, he said—

"That is the Duke of Savoy; if you have any request to make, address yourself to him."

"I have nothing to say," replied Coligny, "except that

I am the prisoner of these brave men, and I desire them to have the amount paid for my ransom."

Emmanuel heard what Coligny said, and remarked, with a smile—

"M. l'Amiral, here are two rascals who, if our prisoner is paid for according to his value, are likely to be richer than some princes of my acquaintance."

And, leaving the admiral in the hands of Don Alonzo de Cazières, Emmanuel Philibert mounted the rampart by the same breach the admiral had descended.

V

A FUGITIVE

THE inhabitants of Saint-Quentin knew well what a terrible game they were playing, in opposing, to the triple Spanish, Flemish and English army encircling the walls, that obstinate resistance over which the fortunes of Philip II. had just triumphed.

They never dreamed therefore of asking for mercy, and according to all probability the conqueror never dreamed of granting it.

It was the nature of the wars of this period to carry frightful reprisals in their train. In those armies composed of men of all countries, when the *condottieri* of the same nation often fought against one another, and when money engagements were often badly enough kept by the contracting parties, pillage was considered in the accounts as a part of the pay, and became sometimes, in case of defeat, the only pay obtained; but in this case friends were pillaged instead of enemies.

As we have seen, the defence had been desperate everywhere except at the point where the Company of the Dauphin had weakened. The enemy occupied the Tour Rouge, the admiral was taken, Emmanuel Philibert was on the rampart, where fighting was still going on, not to save the city, but to kill or be killed, at the three breaches: those defended by Captain Soleil, the company of M. de la Fayette, and Dandelot, the admiral's brother.

The same was the case at several points of the city: the Spaniards, on penetrating into the square by the Rue du

Billon, found bands of armed citizens defending the cross-roads of Cépy, and the entrance to the Rue de la Fosse.

However, at the cries of "City taken!" at the glare of the fire and the sight of the smoke, these partial resistances ceased; the breach of Captain Soleil was forced, then that of M. de la Fayette, then finally, the last, that of M. Dandelot.

According as these breaches were taken, great cries were heard, to which succeeded a gloomy silence; the cries were cries of victory, the silence was that of death.

The breach forced, its defenders butchered or held for ransom—if their appearance showed they were rich enough to be ransomed—the conquerors next rushed on the part of the city nearest the rampart they had first assaulted, and the pillage began.

It lasted five days; conflagration, violation and murder, those devastating guests of cities taken by assault, walked along the streets, sat on the thresholds of ruined or deserted houses, and wallowed even on the bloody flag-stones of churches.

Nothing was spared, neither women, nor children, nor old men, nor monks, nor nuns. In a feeling of piety for stones which he had not for human beings, Philip II. gave orders to respect the sacred edifices, fearing doubtless that the sacrileges committed would fall on his own head. The order was useless; nothing arrested the destruction spread by the hands of the victors. The church of Saint-Pierre-au-Canal was overturned as by an earthquake. The Collegiate church, perforated by cannon-balls, bereft of its magnificent stained glass windows, which were shattered by the discharges of artillery, was despoiled of its silver-gilt ciboriums, its silver vases and chandeliers; the grand Hotel-Dieu was burned, and the hospitals of Les Belles-Portes, Notre-Dame, Lembay, Saint-Antoine, the convent of Beguines, and the house of the Seminary were heaps of ruins at the end of these five days.

Once the rampart was seized, once the resistance in the

streets was annihilated, each thought only of submitting to his fate or escaping. Some offered their throats to the knife or halberd; others took refuge in caves or cellars, where they hoped to avoid the search of their enemies; others, in fine, glided down the walls, hoping to be able to pass between the three armies, which were not very closely united. But almost all those who adopted the last method of escape served as targets for the Spanish arquebusiers or the English archers, and very few ran the gantlet of the bullets of the one or the arrows of the other.

The butchery went on then, not only in the city, but outside of the city, not only on the ramparts, but in the fosses, the meadows, and even in the rivers, across which some in their desperation tried to swim.

However, night fell, and the fusillades ceased for the time.

About three-quarters of an hour after nightfall, about twenty minutes after the last arquebuse-shot was heard, a slight shiver stirred the reeds on that part of the shore of the Somme extending from the sources of the Grosnard to the cutting made in front of Tourival in order to allow the waters of the river to flow into the fosses of the city.

This shiver was so slight that it would have been impossible for the most piercing eye or the most trained ear to distinguish, at ten paces distant, whether it was caused by the first breezes of the night or by the movement of some otter engaged in the nocturnal exercise of fishing. All that could be seen was that it arose from the water, which was rather shallow at this spot, and also that, on reaching the outskirts of the reeds, it died away for some minutes, during which something like a body plunging might be heard; at the same time bubbles of water rose from the bottom of the river to the surface.

Some seconds after, a black point appeared in the middle of the channel of the river; but remaining visible only as long as an animal requires to do in our atmosphere to breathe, it disappeared immediately.

Two or three times again at equal distances, without approaching either bank, and always following the current of the water, the same object disappeared to reappear again.

Then, in fine, the swimmer—for, as he got further from the grief-stricken city, and as a glance to the right and the left assured him that the two banks of the Somme were deserted, the individual whose course we are following appeared to have less dread of being recognized as belonging to the species of the animal kingdom which, by its own private authority, has declared itself the noblest—then, in fine, we repeat, the swimmer swerved voluntarily from the right line, and after a few vigorous strokes, during which the top of his head alone appeared above the surface of the water, he approached the left bank of the river just at a spot where the shadow of a clump of willows rendered the darkness thicker still than in the open places.

He stopped a moment, held his breath, and, remaining as dumb and motionless as the gnarled trunk against which he leaned, he questioned with all his senses, rendered more subtle by the idea of the peril he had just escaped and that which still menaced him, the air, the earth and the water.

Everything seemed silent and tranquil; the city alone, covered with a cloud of smoke through which sometimes rose a jet of flame, seemed, as we have said, to be struggling in the tortures of a ghastly agony.

The fugitive, however, from the very fact that he felt almost in safety, appeared to experience the keener regret at abandoning thus a city in which he left, doubtless, memories of friendship or love dear to his heart.

But this regret, keen though it might be, did not for a moment inspire him with the desire of returning into the city; he was contented to heave a sigh, to murmur a name, and, after assuring himself that his poniard—the only weapon left him, and suspended from his neck by a chain, which, although its material might be dubious during daylight, at night really looked like gold—after assuring himself, we say, that his poniard could be easily drawn from its sheath,

and that a leather belt, to which he seemed to attach great importance, continued to clasp beneath his doublet the slender and flexible waist with which nature had endowed him, he ran toward the marshes of the Abbiette at that pace which is a medium between a run and an ordinary walk, and which modern strategy has baptized by the name of the gymnastic step.

For any one at all unfamiliar with the neighborhood around the city, the road taken by the fugitive would not have been without peril. At the period during which the events occurred which we are relating, all that part of the left bank of the Somme, on which our nocturnal traveller was venturing, was filled with marshes and ponds that could only be crossed by narrow causeways. But what became a peril for an inexperienced man, offered, on the contrary, a chance of safety to one who was acquainted with the passes of the muddy labyrinth; and an invisible friend who followed our man with his eyes, and who anticipated danger to him from the course he was taking, would have been very speedily reassured.

In fact, without ever going aside for a single instant from the line of solid ground which he had to follow, in order not to sink in one of those morasses where the constable had lost so many soldiers, the fugitive crossed the marsh, always keeping the same step, and soon found himself on the first hillock of the undulating plain extending from the village of L'Abbiette to the mill of Gauchy, which, when covered with its harvests of wheat, has all the appearance of a tempestuous sea stirred by the wind.

However, as it was becoming rather difficult to keep up the same step among these harvests which had been partially mown by the enemy in order to obtain straw for their tents or food for their horses, the person whose adventurous course we have been following turned to the left, and was soon treading a well-beaten road; indeed, to meet this road was seemingly the principal object of the clever evolution he had just executed.

As always happens when an aim is reached, our explorer, as soon as he felt the pebbles of the highway instead of the stubbles of the plain under his feet, stopped some moments, for the purpose both of looking around him and recovering his breath; then he continued his way on a line that separated him further from the city than any of those he had taken so far. He ran in this fashion for nearly a quarter of an hour, then stopped anew, with eye fixed, mouth half open and ear stretched.

To the right, a hundred yards away in the plain, stood the mill of Gauchy; its immobility in the darkness gave it double its ordinary size.

But what had brought the fugitive to a standstill was not the sight of this mill, which did not seem to be unknown to him, and which doubtless appeared to him under its true form, not under the form of a giant, as in the case of Don Quixote; what had brought the fugitive to a standstill was a ray of light which suddenly flashed out through the door of the mill, and the noise of a little band of horsemen which reached his ear at the same moment, while a compact and moving mass, growing more and more visible to his eyes, was approaching in his direction.

There was no doubt it was a Spanish patrol which was beating up the country.

The fugitive started on his way.

He was right at the place where the skirmish between the bastard of Waldeck and Emmanuel Philibert occurred —a skirmish in which certain adventurers of our acquaintance had fared so badly, and which had had for poor Fracasso especially such fatal consequences. On the left was the little wood through which two of the assailants had fled; this wood did not appear to be a stranger to the unknown traveller; he darted toward it with the rapidity of a startled deer, and found himself under the shelter of a copse of trees twenty or twenty-five years old, above which rose other mighty trunks that seemed like ancestors of all this little grove.

It was time; the troop was marching along the road, at

about fifteen yards from him, at the moment when he vanished into the little wood.

Whether that he thought his power of hearing increased by contact with the ground, or that he believed there was more security in lying flat on his stomach than in standing erect, the fugitive threw himself on the earth, and remained as motionless and as silent as the trunk at the foot of which he was stretched.

Our man was not mistaken; it was a party of the enemy's cavalry which was scouring the country, and which, perhaps, having learned of the capture of the city by some messenger or by the flames and smoke which rose above the horizon, was going to claim its share of the booty.

A few Spanish words uttered by the troopers, as they passed within hearing of the fugitive, left no doubt as to their identity.

He became more motionless and dumb than ever.

He remained in this condition until these nocturnal prowlers were at a safe distance, until the sound of their voices had entirely faded and even the hoof-beats of their horses were no longer heard; then he raised his head, and either for the purpose of observing the best route to follow, so as to avoid such meetings in future, or to still the pulsations of his heart, whose violence denoted the strength of his emotions, he rose slowly, first on his knees, then on his hands, crept along for about six feet, and, feeling by the roughness of the roots springing from the earth that he was protected by the shadow of one of those immense trees towering here and there above the copse already mentioned by us, he turned round, and found himself sitting, with his back against the trunk and his face toward the road.

Only then did the fugitive feel like breathing freely, and, although his clothes were still wet with the waters of the Somme, he wiped his forehead covered with sweat, and passed his small and elegant hand through the curls of his long hair.

No sooner had he finished this operation, which made

him heave a sigh of contentment, than it seemed to him as if some object, moving above his head, was also caressing in similar fashion the fair locks of which he evidently, in the ordinary circumstances of life, took particular care.

Desirous to know what was this object, animate or inanimate, that ventured on such liberties, the young man—it was easy to guess, by the suppleness and elasticity of his movements, that the fugitive was a young man—threw himself backward, and, leaning on his elbows, tried to distinguish in the thick darkness the object which for a moment had excited his curiosity.

But all around him was so sombre that he could only distinguish a straight line standing at one time vertically above his head, at another above his breast, and waving stiffly backward and forward at the will of the breeze that was drawing from the surrounding trees those vague nocturnal murmurs which make the traveller shudder in spite of himself, disposed, as he is likely to be, to take them for the wailings of souls in pain.

Our senses, we know, are seldom sufficient singly to give us a clear idea of the objects with which they are brought in contact, and are rendered complete only by the aid of one another. Our fugitive therefore resolved to complete the sight by the touch, the eye by the hand; he stretched out his hand, and the result seemed to turn him to stone; then suddenly, as if he had forgotten that the precarious situation in which he was enjoined silence and immobility, he uttered a scream, and rushed out of the wood, a prey to the most frightful terror.

It was not a hand that had just amorously caressed his black hair, it was a foot, and that foot belonged to a man who was hanged.

It is unnecessary to say that this unfortunate was our old acquaintance the poet Fracasso, who, as the report had run, found, after the unlucky skirmish of the bastard of Waldeck, in the past participle, the rhyme he had so long vainly searched for in the infinitive.

VI

TWO FUGITIVES

THE stag started anew by the hounds does not clear the woods and bound over the plain more speedily than did the dark-haired young man, who appeared to be troubled with a violent nervous susceptibility in respect to the hanged—a class of people, however, who are much less to be dreaded after the operation than before it.

The only precaution he took, when at the outskirts of the little coppice, was to turn his back on Saint-Quentin, and run in a direction opposite to the city; the only desire he appeared to have was to get away from there as soon as possible.

The fugitive consequently for more than an hour went at a pace that would have seemed impossible in the case of a professional runner, so that in three quarters of an hour he had made nearly two leagues.

These two leagues accomplished, he found himself beyond Essigny-le-Grand, and on this side of Gibercourt.

Two things forced the fugitive to a momentary halt: first, his breath was failing him; next, the ground was becoming so uneven that it was necessary, I do not say to run, but even to walk with extreme caution, under penalty of stumbling at every step.

Consequently, it being clearly impossible to go further, he lay down on one of the little knolls around him, panting like a stag at bay.

Besides, he had without doubt reflected that he must

have long passed the Spanish outposts; and as to the hanged man, if he could have come down from his tree and pursued him, he would not have waited three-quarters of an hour in leaving the other world and having his little fun in this one.

Our young fugitive might have made a reflection on this latter point which would have been still more correct: if the hanged were able to come down from the gibbet, whether that gibbet stretches out its dry and naked arm at the corner of a cross-road, or a leafy and succulent branch in the forest, the situation is not so agreeable for them that they would not descend on the first day, if they could. Now, if our calculation is correct, twenty days had elapsed between the battle of Saint-Quentin and the capture of the city; and since Fracasso had remained patiently hanging from his rope for twenty days, it is probable that he would continue to do so, at least until the rope should break.

While our fugitive was recovering his breath, and no doubt giving way to the reflections we have just made, the church clock of Gibercourt struck eleven and three-quarters, and the moon was rising behind the woods of Rémigny.

As a result, when, after these reflections, the fugitive raised his head, he was able, in the light of the trembling moonbeams, to recognize the landscape of which he formed the most animated part.

He was on the field of battle, on the cemetery hastily constructed by Catherine de Laillier, mother of the Seigneur of Gibercourt; the little knoll on which he had sought a moment's repose was nothing else than the mound of a grave in which twenty French soldiers had found eternal rest.

It looked as if the fugitive could not get out of the funereal circle which seemed to surround him ever since he left Saint-Quentin.

However, as it appears that, for certain organizations,

the dead bodies sleeping three feet under ground are less frightful than those swinging three feet above, our fugitive was satisfied this time with yielding to a nervous trembling accompanied by that little shake in the voice which denotes that an icy thrill is passing between the hide and the flesh of that poor animal, the most easily frightened of all next to the hare—namely, man.

Then, though still breathing hard from the headlong race he had just finished, our fugitive strained his ears to listen to the cries of an owl that arose, regular and melancholy, from a clump of trees left standing as if to point out the centre of the cemetery.

But soon, closely as this doleful chant appeared to hold his attention, his brow became full of wrinkles, and his head turned slightly from right to left, as if his mind was affected by another sound blending with the one he was attracted by.

This noise was more material than the first; the first seemed to descend from heaven to earth, the second seemed to rise from earth to heaven. It was the noise of the far-away gallop of a horse so well imitated in the Latin language, according to the saying of professors, lost in admiration for two thousand years, in presence of the verses of Virgil—

Quadrupedante putrem sonitu quatit ungula campum.

I would not dare to say that our fugitive knew this verse; but most undoubtedly he knew the gallop of a horse, for scarcely was the sound of this gallop perceptible to human ears when the young man was on his legs and questioning the horizon with his eyes. However, as the horse was not galloping on a highway, but on a dusty ground plowed by the marches and counter-marches of the French and Spanish armies, and as this ground, furrowed by cannon-balls and covered with the remains of the harvest, had not the capacity of yielding a very clear sound, it happened that

horse and rider were in reality much nearer the fugitive than the latter had in the beginning imagined.

The first idea that came to our young man was that the individual lately hanged whose acquaintance he had so unpleasantly made, having no confidence in his legs, on account of their stiffness, had borrowed from the stables of Death some fantastic steed or other, with whose aid he had pursued him; and the rapid march of the rider, the little noise made by the horse on the way, rendered this supposition possible, particularly in the case of a nervous organization abnormally excited by the events that had just occurred and the lugubrious aspect of the theatre on which they were accomplished.

One thing was certain, however; namely, that horse and rider were very nearly within five hundred yards of the young man, and that the latter was beginning to distinguish them both, as far as it was possible to distinguish by the dim light of the moon, now in its last quarter, the spectres of a horse and his rider.

Perhaps, if the fantastic centaur had shaped his course twenty paces to the right or left of our fugitive, the latter would not have budged, and would have lain in the shadow somewhere between two tombs while the apocalyptic vision was passing, instead of taking to flight; but no, he was in a direct line with the course of the new-comer, and it was necessary to fly as quickly as possible, if he did not want to be treated by the infernal horseman as Heliodorus, twenty years before, had been treated by the heavenly horseman.

He gave one rapid glance toward the point of the horizon opposite him from which the danger came, and about three hundred yards in front of him, he perceived, like a gloomy curtain, the outskirts of the Rémigny woods.

He thought for a moment of making for the village of Gibercourt, or for the village of Ly-Fontaines, placed, as he was, midway between these hamlets, the first being on his right and the second on his left; but after calcu-

lating the distances, he recognized that he was at least five hundred yards from each of them, while it was hardly three hundred to the borders of the wood.

It was, then, to the wood he ran with the fleetness of a stag whom the pack, having missed the trail, has let rest for a few moments his stiffened limbs; but at the very moment our fugitive exchanged inaction for motion, it seemed to him that the rider uttered a cry of joy which had nothing human in it. This cry, borne to his ears by the vaporous wings of the night, gave fresh nimbleness to his feet; and as the noise of this chase frightened the owl hid in the clump of trees, who fled, uttering a last wail more doleful than the others, he envied those rapid and silent wings by whose aid the sombre bird of night was soon lost in the curtain of woods stretched out before him.

But if the fugitive had not the wings of the owl, the horse of the rider pursuing him appeared to have those of the Chimæra; while leaping across the tombs, the young man cast a look behind him, and he saw horse and rider drawing nearer and nearer to him with frightful rapidity, and at the same time increasing enormously in size.

Moreover, the horse was neighing and the horseman was howling.

If the arteries of the temples of the fugitive did not beat so strongly, he would have understood that there was nothing supernatural in the neighing of the horse, and that the howling of the rider was simply the repetition of the word *Stop!* uttered in all sorts of tones, from that of entreaty to that of menace; but as, in spite of this ascending gamut, the fugitive, far from stopping, redoubled his efforts to gain the wood, the horseman also redoubled his efforts to reach the fugitive.

However, although the breathing of the latter was as hoarse as that of the quadruped pursuing him, he had managed to get within fifty yards of the outskirts of the wood; but then the horse and the horseman were not more than a hundred yards from him.

These last fifty yards were for the fugitive what the last fifty strokes are to a sailor tossed by the waves, and who must reckon on them as his sole chance of reaching the shore; and yet the shipwrecked sailor has this chance that, if his strength fail him, the flow of the tide may bear him to the strand alive, while no such hope could encourage the fugitive, if—as was more than probable—his legs failed him before reaching that blessed shelter where the owl had gone first, and seemed now to be mocking with her dismal voice his last impotent efforts.

With arms strained, body bent forward, parched throat, gasping breath, a tempestuous buzzing in the ears and a cloud of blood in the eyes, our fugitive was within twenty yards of the wood, when, turning round, he saw that the horse, which never ceased neighing, and the rider, who never ceased shouting, were within ten yards of him.

Then he made an effort to redouble his speed; but his voice died away in his throat, his limbs grew stiff. He heard something like the rumbling of the thunder behind him, felt something like a breath of flame on his shoulder, experienced a shock like that which a rock hurled by a catapult might have caused, and rolled, half-fainting, down into the ditch of the little wood.

Then he saw, as through a mist of flame, the rider get off his horse, or rather leap out of the saddle, run up to him, support, and raise him up, seat him on the slope, and, after examining him by the moonlight, suddenly cry out—

"By the soul of Luther, it is our dear Yvonnet!"

At these words, the adventurer, who was beginning to recognize the fact that the rider was human, made an effort to collect his senses, riveted his haggard eyes on the person who, after such a savage chase, now addressed him with such reassuring words, and in a voice which the dryness of his throat rendered like the rattle of one in the last agony, murmured—

"By the soul of the Pope, it is Monseigneur Dandelot!"

We know why Yvonnet fled before Monseigneur Dandelot; it remains for us to explain why Monseigneur Dandelot pursued Yvonnet. For this purpose, it will be enough to take a glance backward, and take up the thread of events where we have let it drop; namely, at the moment when Emmanuel Philibert planted his foot on the breach of Saint-Quentin.

VII

ADVENTURER AND CAPTAIN

WE HAVE told how Yvonnet, Maldent, and Procope defended the same breach as Coligny.

The breach had not been difficult to defend, not having been attacked.

We have told also how the neighboring breach had been surprised by the Spanish companies, and how the Dauphin's Company had, from a sad want of courage, allowed it to be taken.

Finally, we have told how, on seeing what was occurring on the left, Coligny ran forward, calling on those about him to follow, and how, after the détour which the traverse forced him to make, he mounted the rampart which the Spaniards were already attacking, crying—

"It is here that we must die!"

This generous determination was surely in the heart of the admiral, and undoubtedly he did all he could to give it effect, although he did not die on the breach, either on account of the favor or the vengeance of Heaven—according as we look at his assassination on the festival of Saint-Bartholomew from the Catholic or the Protestant point of view.

But this opinion, courageously expressed by a great-hearted general, bearing on his shoulders the weight of such military and political responsibility—that it is necessary to die on the day one is vanquished—this opinion was undoubtedly not that of the three adventurers who had hired out to him their arms, through the agency of Attorney Procope, for the defence of the city.

Then, seeing that the city was taken, and that there was no means of defending it, they conceived that their engagement was legally dead; and each one individually, without communicating his opinion to his co-associates, fled in whatever direction he hoped to find safety.

Maldent and Procope disappeared at the angle of the convent of the Jacobins; and as we have no business with them at the present moment, we shall abandon them to their good or ill fortune, in order to follow that of their companion Yvonnet.

His first idea was, we must do him that justice, to take the road to the Vieux-Marché and offer his sword and poniard to his good friend Mademoiselle Gudule Pauquet; but doubtless he thought that, however formidable such weapons might be in his experienced hands, they could, under the circumstances, be of only slight utility to a young lady whose natural beauty and grace were a far more efficacious protection against the anger of the conquerors than all the swords and poniards in the world.

Besides, he knew that the father and uncle of Gudule had prepared a hiding-place in the cellars of their houses for their most precious objects—and surely the most precious object of all was their daughter and niece—which hiding-place they regarded as beyond the reach of discovery, and in which they had collected provisions enough to last ten days. Now, furious as was the pillage, it was probable that before the tenth day the leaders would restore order in the unfortunate city, and, order once restored, Gudule would put her nose out of her hiding-place and reappear in the light of the sun.

The sack of the city would then, in all probability, pass by, owing to the precautions taken, without the young girl suffering any harm; and, like the first Christians in the Catacombs, she would hear in security from the place in which she was concealed the roar of carnage and murder above her head.

Once convinced that his presence, instead of being useful

to mademoiselle, could only be hurtful to her, Yvonnet, besides not being at all anxious to bury himself alive for eight or ten days like a badger or a marmot, resolved, at any risk, to remain in the full light of day, and, instead of hiding in some corner of the besieged city, hastened to place the greatest possible distance between it and him, during that evening and the following night.

Abandoning Maldent and Procope, who, as we have stated, turned the corner of the Jacobin convent, he began by threading the Rue des Ligniers, made a cross-cut to the extremity of the Rue de la Sellerie, took the Rue des Brebis, went up the cross-road of Les Campions, went down as far as the Ruelle de la Brassette, glided along the Rue des Canonniers, and gaining the church of Sainte-Catherine by the Rue de la Poterie, he found himself on the rampart between the tower and postern of that name.

During his progress, without stopping for this double operation, Yvonnet unbuckled his sword-belt and the fastenings of his cuirass; and as neither sword nor cuirass could be of any use to him in the plan of flight he had adopted, he threw his sword over a wall of the Rue Brassette, and his cuirass behind a pillar in the Rue de la Poterie. On the other hand, he made sure of his poniard by suspending it from the gilt copper chain which proudly surrounded his neck, and he buckled tightly around his waist the belt containing the twenty-five gold crowns which constituted the half of his fortune; for if Malemort, not being able to fly, had buried his, Yvonnet, who relied on the agility of his legs to save life and crowns, had not the slightest idea of abandoning the part of the treasure he was permitted to dispose of.

After arriving at the rampart, Yvonnet strode resolutely along the parapet; and then bracing himself, and with his arms pressed to his side, he leaped into the fosse filled with fresh water that wound along the bottom of the wall. He passed so quickly that the sentinels paid scarcely any attention to him; moreover, the cries, resounding at the same

moment from the other side of the city, had much more interest for them than the man or stone they heard rolling into the fosse, and not seen again above the water, whose widening circles were breaking on one side against the wall, on the other against the turfy slope of the Grosnard marshes.

The individual whose fall had caused these multiplied circles was not anxious to reappear, and after swimming under water for some time, went and crouched among a bed of water-lilies, whose protecting leaves concealed from all eyes his head buried in the water up to the mouth.

From that point, he was witness of a sight that was very capable of preparing his nerves for the irritable condition we have seen them reach.

The city once taken, many combatants followed the same course which he did—some, as he had done, jumping from the top of the rampart, others quite simply flying through the Sainte-Catherine postern.

But all unfortunately, instead of waiting till nightfall, attempted to escape at once. Now, to escape at once was impossible, seeing the circle the English had drawn carefully parallel to that side of the wall, from the old causeway of Vermand to the banks of the Somme.

All the fugitives were, then, received with arquebuse-shots or arrows and driven to the marsh, where, to the delight of the English—excellent marksmen, as is well known—they served admirably as targets.

Two or three bodies, falling backward, rolled to where Yvonnet was, and then were carried away by the current of the water to join the course of the Somme.

This gave the adventurer an idea: it was to play the part of a corpse, and by keeping rigid and motionless, to gain alive the middle of the stream which was bearing away the dead.

All went well up to the spot where the waters of the fosses fall into the Somme; but when he arrived there, Yvonnet, on turning his head round and cautiously open-

ing his eyes, saw a double hedge of Englishmen scattered along both banks, who, not having any living persons to aim at, were firing at the dead as an amusement.

The young man, instead of maintaining the cadaverous rigidity which kept him on the surface of the water, rolled himself into a ball, sank to the bottom, and with four strokes gained the forest of reeds, where he was safely concealed, and from which we have seen him issue in order to reach the other bank.

As we have already followed our traveller from the moment he reappeared in the shadow of the willows until he fell gasping at the outskirts of the Rémigny wood, it is useless, at least for the moment, to trouble ourselves any further about him.

We shall therefore leave him and follow Monseigneur Dandelot, giving full details of all the incidents that had just happened to this illustrious brother of the admiral, whose friendly face had just drawn a joyous cry of recognition from Yvonnet.

We have said that the breach guarded by Dandelot was the last taken.

Dandelot was not only a general, but a soldier; he had fought with halberd and sword as well as the meanest reiter in the army could have done.

As nothing distinguished him from others except his courage, he was respected for his courage, which had yielded to numbers only; a dozen men attacked and disarmed him, knocked him down and brought him prisoner to the camp, without having the slightest idea as to the identity of the captain, who had, we will not say surrendered, but been taken prisoner by them.

Once in the camp, he was recognized by the constable and admiral, who, while concealing his name and their interest in him as uncle and brother, pledged themselves to pay a thousand crowns for his ransom whenever the ransoms of these two illustrious captives were settled.

But it was not possible to hide the rank of the prisoner

from Emmanuel Philibert, who invited Dandelot to supper, as he had done Montmorency and Coligny, but at the same time recommended an equally strict watch to be kept on the third prisoner as on the two others.

The supper was prolonged to half-past ten at night, with a courteousness worthy of the fine days of chivalry. Emmanuel Philibert did his best to make all these French nobles, prisoners as on the morrow of Poitiers, Crécy, and Agincourt, forget they were at the table of their conqueror, and there was infinitely more talk of the siege of Metz and the battle of Rémy, during the evening, than of the battle of Saint-Laurent and the storming of Saint-Quentin.

At half-past ten, as we have said, they rose from table; tents had been prepared for the noble prisoners in the very centre of the camp, within a palisaded inclosure, the only entrance to which was by a narrow opening guarded by two sentinels.

In addition, the inclosure was surrounded on the outside by a circle of sentries.

Often, during the long winter nights of the siege, had Dandelot gazed, from the top of the walls, on the gigantic camp lying at his feet. He knew the quarters of each leader, the position of the tents, the intervals kept between the men of the different nations, and even the peculiarities of the ground over which streamers were now floating around the city.

Since he became a prisoner—and we know he had not been one long—one single idea, like the weight of a pendulum, was beating on both sides of the skull of Dandelot.

This idea was that of escaping.

He was bound by no promise, and, as we have said, he had not surrendered; he had been taken, and he judged rightly that the sooner he put his idea in execution, the better would be his chances of success.

Our readers will not be astonished, therefore, to learn that no sooner did he leave the quarters of Emmanuel Philibert for the tent of the prisoners, than his eye began

to question eagerly all the objects presented to his view, with the desire of making of the most futile and insignificant of these objects, at a given moment, a means of salvation.

An officer was about to be sent by Emmanuel Philibert to Cambrai, to announce the capture of the city and carry with him a list of the prisoners of note.

This list was further increased during supper; and the officer, after Emmanuel took leave of his guests, entered the tent of the generalissimo, in order that the latter might add to the list the new names that must be added.

A horse from Emmanuel's stables, the fleetest they contained, was standing ten yards from the quarters of the prince, the bridle tied round one of the saddle-bows and the bit held by a groom.

Dandelot approached the courser as a lover of horses naturally attracted by the presence of a fine thoroughbred; then, justifying his reputation as one of the best riders in the French army, he leaped into the saddle, dug his spurs into the horse's sides, knocked down the groom, and set out at a gallop.

The prostrate groom shouted for help, but Dandelot was already twenty yards from the point where he started. He passed like a vision before the tents of Comte de Mégue; the sentry aimed at him, but the match of the arquebuse went out. Another sentry, armed with a musket, suspecting that the cavalier who was passing like a flash was the object of the cries now resounding from all quarters, fired on him and missed; five or six soldiers tried to bar the way with their halberds, but he overturned some, leaped over others, passed them all, encountered the Somme on his course, bounded over a third part of it, instead of trying to cut the current, let his horse be carried on by it, and in the midst of a fusillade which had no other result than to carry off his hat and make holes in his breeches, without even grazing the skin, he drew near the other bank.

When he arrived there, he was almost safe.

Consummate horseman as he was, he had too speedy a

knowledge of the horse between his legs to dread the pursuit of other horses over which he had just gained five or six minutes; the only thing to be feared was if some ball were to knock down his horse or so wound it as to prevent him from continuing his way.

Consequently, Dandelot was for a moment anxious as he got on firm ground; this moment was short. After galloping for some time, Dandelot saw that the horse was as safe as himself.

Dandelot was not acquainted with the country, but he was acquainted with the principal towns around Saint-Quentin: Laon, La Fère and Ham; he guessed instinctively where Paris lay, at twenty-five or twenty-six leagues from these places. The main point for him was to get out of danger; he spurred straight on before him, and naturally found himself on the line of Gauchy, Gruois, and Essigny-le-Grand.

On coming in sight of the latter village, the cavalier was able, as the moon had risen, to form a notion, not of the road he travelled nor of the place where he was, but of the general aspect of the landscape.

Dandelot, it will be remembered, was not present at the battle; he could not then be struck with the aspect presented by the field of battle, which had so troubled Yvonnet.

He continued his course, slackening, however, the pace of his steed, and passed by the village of Benay and between the two mills of Hinocourt, casting eager glances on his left and right. What our cavalier was searching for was some single traveller, some peasant of the neighborhood, who could give him information as to the place where he was, and serve him as guide, or at least put him on his road.

This was what was making him rise every moment in his stirrups and gaze round the horizon as far as his eyes could reach.

Suddenly, in the midst of the ground broken for the cemetery of Le Piteux, it seemed to him as if he saw a human shadow; but the shadow appeared as desirous of

flying as he was of reaching it. The shadow, indeed, fled with the speed of a hare; Dandelot gave chase. The shadow made for the wood of Rémigny; and by all means possible to a rider—that is to say, by spurs, knees, and voice—he increased the speed of his horse, clearing hillocks, hedges, and streams, in order to reach these cursed woods before the shadow he was pursuing, which would resemble that of the light-footed Achilles, if the terror by which he was evidently inspired did not render him unworthy of that victorious name.

The shadow was only twenty yards from the coppice; Dandelot was only thirty from the shadow; he made one final effort, and we have seen the result of it. The shadow —which, as he drew nearer, took the solidity of a body— rolled at his feet, struck by the breast of the horse. He leaped from the saddle to bring help to this fugitive whose information might be so valuable to him; and in the poor devil, gasping, almost unconscious, and half-dead from fright, he recognized, to his great joy as well as to his great astonishment, the adventurer Yvonnet.

As to Yvonnet, with equal astonishment, but with still greater joy, he recognized also the brother of the admiral, Monseigneur Dandelot de Coligny.

VIII

WAITING

THE news of the battle of Saint-Quentin resounded like an unlooked-for thunderbolt throughout the length and breadth of France, and found its echo especially in the chateau of Saint-Germain. Never had Montmorency, crotchety and ignorant old soldier, greater need, if he was not to fall into complete disgrace, of the inexplicable support lent him by Diane de Poitiers' constant and unchanging favor in urging his claims on Henri II.

In fact, the blow was terrible: one-half of the nobility engaged with the Duc de Guise in the conquest of Naples, and the other half annihilated. A few gentlemen, escaped gasping and bleeding from that great butchery, were grouped around the Duc de Nevers, who had been wounded in the thigh; and this was all the active force left to France.

Four or five cities badly protected by wretched ramparts, badly supplied with munitions and provisions, badly provided with garrisons—Ham, La Fère, Le Catelet—and, like a sentinel lost in the midst of the fire, the least strong, the worst defended, the least tenable of all.

Three hostile armies, the first two exasperated by a long alternation of defeats and victories, the third quite new and fresh, allured by the memories of Crécy and Agincourt, and anxious to see that famous Paris, a glimpse of whose walls had been obtained under Charles VI.; that is to say, a century and a half before.

A king isolated, without personal genius, brave, but with that bravery peculiar to Frenchmen, capable of being an excellent soldier, incapable of being a mediocre general.

For advisers, the Cardinal de Guise and Catherine de Médicis; that is to say, the guileful policy of Italy added to French ruse and Lorraine pride.

Moreover, a frivolous court of queens and princesses, of gay and light women: little Queen Mary, little Princess Elisabeth, Madame Marguerite of France, Diane de Poitiers, and her daughter—now almost betrothed to one of the sons of the Connétable de Montmorency, François Charles Henri —and finally, little Princess Marguerite.

So the fatal news of the loss of the battle of Saint-Quentin, or Saint-Laurent, seemed, in all probability, but the forerunner of two events not less terrible—the capture of Saint-Quentin and the march of the Spanish, Flemish, and English armies on Paris.

The king, therefore, began by making secret preparations for a retreat on Orleans—that old fortress of France which, retaken by a maid more than a hundred years before, had become the tabernacle of the holy ark of the French monarchy.

The queen, the three princes, and the little princess were desired to hold themselves in readiness to start at any moment of the day or night, at the first order given.

As for the king, he was determined to join the remnant of his army, wherever it might be, and combat with them until he shed the last drop of his blood.

All measures were taken for the succession of the Dauphin François, in case of his death, with Catherine de Médicis for regent and the Cardinal de Lorraine for adviser.

Moreover, couriers, as we think we have already mentioned, had been sent to Duc François de Guise to hasten his return, and lead back with him all he could lead back of the Army of Italy.

These dispositions taken, Henri II. waited anxiously, with his ear turned toward the highway from Picardy.

Then he learned that, contrary to all probability, and even contrary to all hope, Saint-Quentin was still holding out. Fifteen thousand men had been annihilated under its

walls; the heroic city was struggling against three victorious armies with four or five hundred soldiers of all arms. It is true that, besides the soldiers, Saint-Quentin possessed that valiant body of citizens whose courage we have seen tested.

The taking of the city was looked forward to for two or three days with the same anxiety.

No such thing happened. It was learned, on the contrary, that Dandelot had entered the place with some five hundred men, and that the admiral and he had taken an oath to bury themselves under the ruins of the city. Now, it was known that when Coligny and Dandelot took such oaths, they kept them. The king was therefore somewhat reassured: the danger still existed, but it was less imminent.

All the hope of France was, as we see, concentrated on Saint-Quentin.

Henri II. prayed to Heaven that the city might hold out for eight days. Meanwhile, in order to be within reach of speedier news, he started for Compiègne; at Compiègne, he was only a few leagues from the theatre of war.

Catherine de Médicis accompanied him.

When sound advice was needed, Henri had recourse to Catherine; when he desired to pass a pleasant moment, he sought Diane de Poitiers.

The Cardinal de Guise remained at Paris to watch and encourage the Parisians.

In case of urgency, the king was to join the army, if there still existed an army, to encourage it by his presence; Catherine would return to Saint-Germain and make arrangements for the departure of the rest of the royal family.

Henri found the population much less dismayed than he feared; the custom of the armies of the fourteenth, fifteenth, and sixteenth centuries of not venturing a step in their conquests until they had taken possession of the cities on their way, gave a little respite to Compiègne, protected by Ham, Le Catelet, and La Fère.

Henri took up his residence in the chateau.

At the same moment spies were sent in the direction of

Saint-Quentin, in order to get information as to the state of the place, and couriers were despatched to Laon and Soissons, to inquire what had become of the army.

The spies returned with the news that Saint-Quentin was holding out well, and did not show the least appearance of surrendering; the couriers returned, saying that two or three thousand men—all that remained of the army—were rallying at Laon around the Duc de Nevers.

Moreover, of these two or three thousand men the Duc de Nevers was making the best possible use.

He knew the delays of this war of sieges which—Saint-Quentin once carried—the Spanish army was going to undertake, and therefore he devoted his whole attention to reinforcing the towns capable of retarding the march of the enemy. He sent Comte de Sancerre to Guise, where the latter led his own troop of cavalry, that of Prince de la Roche-sur-Yon and the two companies of Estrées and Cuisieux. He sent Captain Bordillon to La Fère with five companies of foot and the same of cavalry. In fine, Baron de Polignac set out for Le Catelet, M. d'Humières for Péronne, M. de Chausnes for Corbie, M. de Sésois for Ham, M. de Clermont d'Amboise for Saint-Dizier, Bouchavannes for Coucy, and Montigny for Chauny.

As for himself, he remained at Laon with a corps of a thousand men; it was there the king was to send him whatever new troops he might levy, and the reinforcements expected from other parts of France.

Such was the first dressing applied to the wound, but nothing told yet that the wound was not mortal.

It would be difficult to imagine anything sadder than this old chateau of Compiègne, gloomy enough in itself, but rendered more so by the presence of its two royal guests.

Whenever Henri II. came to this residence—and he usually did so three or four times a year—it was to people chateau, town and fort with that magnificent court of young ladies and young lords which he always carried in

his train; it was to fill the Gothic halls and corridors with music of festival instruments; it was to make the forest re-echo with sound of horn and baying of hounds.

This time it was not so. Toward the close of the day, a heavy chariot stopped at the gate of the chateau, without awakening the curiosity of the inhabitants of the city it had just traversed. The porter was hardly interested in this event, apparently so unimportant—a man of forty years, with an almost African complexion, a black beard and hollow eyes; a woman of thirty-six, with skin white and delicate, sparkling eyes, superb teeth and black hair, descended from this carriage, followed by three or four officers in waiting. The porter regarded them with astonishment, cried out, "The king! the queen!" then, on a sign to be silent made by Henri, conducted them into the interior court, closed the gate behind them, and all was over.

The next day, it was known in Compiègne that the king and Catherine de Médicis had arrived the evening before, escorted by the night alone, less sad and gloomy than they, and were dwelling in the chateau.

The population was at once excited, the people gathered together, and with cries of "*Vive le roi! vive la reine!*" proceeded to the princely residence.

Henri was always very much loved; Catherine was not yet hated.

The king and queen appeared on the old iron balcony.

"My friends," said the king, "I have come into your walls to be myself the defender of the marches of France. From here, my eyes and my ears will remain constantly fixed on Saint-Quentin. I hope the enemy may not come here; but, in any case, let each make preparations for defence, as the brave people of Saint-Quentin have done. Whoever has news, good or bad, from the besieged city, will be welcome at the chateau as the bearer of it."

Shouts of "*Vive le roi!*" resounded anew. Henri and Catherine made that royal gesture of placing the hand on the heart which has so long abused the people, and retired

backward. The windows were closed behind them; then every one went to prepare for the defence, and the king appeared again no more.

The gardener, when questioned, said that he was in the habit of walking in the gloomiest alleys of the park, sometimes until one or two in the morning, stopping suddenly, listening motionless, often even applying his ear to the ground, in order to catch the far-off detonations of the cannon. But, as we know, all premature attacks had ceased, with the object of giving Emmanuel Philibert time to prepare the general attack.

Then the king would return to the chateau, without any information, and, with increased anxiety, often went up to a sort of tower, from which there was a view of the Saint-Quentin road for a considerable distance, up to where the Laon and Ham highways branched off; his eyes questioned every traveller appearing on this route, at once dreading and desiring to find in him the messenger he was waiting for always.

On the 24th Henri was walking as usual in the park, when suddenly a distant rumbling startled him. He stopped and listened; but he had no need to apply his ear to the earth to understand that thundering discharges of artillery were succeeding one another without interruption.

For three days, far into the night and long before sunrise, the same sounds were heard; Henri, listening to this awful echo, could not understand how a single house in Saint-Quentin was left standing.

On the 27th, at two in the afternoon, the noise ceased.

What had happened? What meant this silence, after the frightful sounds that preceded it?

Without doubt, Saint-Quentin, less privileged than those fabulous salamanders which François I. had placed in his coat of arms, had succumbed in a circle of fire.

He waited till seven or eight in the evening, listening to hear if the sounds that had ceased would not burst forth

again. He still hoped that the besiegers, from weariness, would be forced to grant terms to the city.

However, at nine in the evening, he could no longer resist his anxiety; he despatched two or three couriers, with orders to take different roads, so that, if one of them fell into the hands of the enemy, the others at least might have a chance of escaping.

He wandered in the park until midnight; then he returned to the chateau, lay down, and vainly sought sleep in his feverish sheets; but he could not sleep, and, rising at daybreak, he directed his steps to his observatory.

No sooner was he there than he saw, at the extremity of that road so often explored by his eyes, clouds of dust on the path which the first rays of the sun were beginning to gild, and a horse galloping toward the town with two riders on his back.

Henri had not a moment's doubt; these two riders must be messengers bringing news from Saint-Quentin. He sent persons to meet them, in order that they might not be delayed at the Noyon gate. A quarter of an hour after, the horse stopped before the portcullis of the chateau; and Henri uttered a cry of surprise, almost of joy, on recognizing Dandelot, and seeing behind him, standing respectfully on the threshold of the door, a second personage, whose face was not unfamiliar, although he could not recall, at the first glance, where he had seen it.

Our reader, who has probably a better memory than King Henri II., and whose memory we shall assist on this point, will recall that it was at the chateau of Saint-Germain, when our adventurer served as squire to the unfortunate Théligny, afterward killed during the first days of the siege.

We can hardly be required, because Dandelot and Yvonnet happened to be riding the same horse, to relate how, after the mutual recognition at the outskirts of the Rémigny wood, the best harmony was established between the fugitive flying and the fugitive pursuing; how Yvonnet, who

knew the country by heart, having explored it by night and day in every fashion, offered his services as guide to Dandelot, and how, in fine, in exchange for these services, the admiral's brother invited Mademoiselle Gudule's lover to ride behind him—an arrangement which had the double advantage of sparing the legs of the adventurer and not delaying the captain.

The horse would perhaps have preferred some other adjustment; but he was a noble animal, full of fire and courage; he had evidently done his best, and actually spent only three hours and a half in clearing the distance between Gibercourt and Compiègne—and that distance was nearly eleven leagues!

IX

THE PARISIANS

THE news brought by the two messengers was news that was soon told, but on which the listeners question again and again.

After the summary recital which was first made by Dándelot, of the capture of the city, the king passed to details; and he soon learned, partly from the captain, partly from the adventurer, almost everything we have related to our readers.

The whole, summed up, amounted to this: the city was taken; the constable and Coligny—that is to say, in the absence of the Duc de Guise, the two best captains of the realm—were prisoners, and it was yet unknown whether the victorious army would amuse itself with fighting before a few tumble-down towns or march directly on Paris.

But fighting before these tumble-down towns was just the kind of war that suited the timid and cautious temper of Philip II.

To march straight on Paris was a determination which harmonized well with the adventurous genius of Emmanuel Philibert.

Which of these two plans would the conquerors adopt?

Neither Dandelot nor Yvonnet could give an answer based on actual knowledge.

Dandelot was of opinion that the Duke of Savoy and the King of Spain would march on Paris immediately.

As to Yvonnet, such a question rose entirely above the level of his strategic views; but as the king insisted on having his opinion, he concurred with Dandelot.

The feeling of the majority, therefore, was that the conquerors would not waste their time, and consequently the conquered had no time to waste.

It was decided at the same moment that, after a few minutes' rest, the two messengers should set out, Dandelot in one direction, and Yvonnet in another, both charged with commissions in harmony with the military and social position filled by each respectively.

Dandelot would accompany Catherine de Médicis to Paris; Henri, who did not wish to quit the neighborhood of the enemy, was sending the queen to make an appeal to the patriotism of the Parisian bourgeois.

Yvonnet would set out for Laon, would remit the king's letters to the Duc de Nevers, and would try, under some disguise or other, to ramble about the Spanish army and find out the intentions of the King of Spain and the plan he was likely to follow. There were many chances that the person charged with this perilous mission would be taken and hanged; but this idea which, from the memories it called up, would have made Yvonnet shudder during the night, had not the slightest effect on him during the day. Yvonnet accepted them: he was troubled with nerves only in the dark; but then, as we have seen, he was troubled frightfully.

M. Dandelot was authorized by the king to come to an understanding with the Cardinal de Lorraine, who had the management of the finances, as to the money which he and his brother needed in the precarious situation in which they were. As for Yvonnet, he received twenty gold crowns for the message he had just brought and the commission he was going to execute; moreover, the king gave him permission, as he did once before, to select in his stables the best horse he could find there.

At ten in the morning—that is to say, after resting six hours—the two messengers started for their respective destinations; but both turned their backs on each other at the gate, the one going to the east, the other to the west.

We shall find again Yvonnet, the least important of our two characters, later on, or if we do not find him, as we are likely, at least, to hear news of him, let us follow the steps of M. Dandelot, which are also the steps of Queen Catherine de Médicis, who, in his company and under his protection, is travelling to Paris as fast as the heavy chariot drawn by four horses allows her to proceed to that capital.

In virtue of the axiom that danger viewed from afar is much more terrible than danger viewed close at hand, the terror in Paris was at first, perhaps, greater than in Compiègne.

Never, since the time when the English, from the plain of Saint-Denis, were able to catch a glimpse of the towers of Notre-Dame and the belfry of the Sainte-Chapelle, had such fear taken hold of the Parisians. It reached such a point the day after the report of the battle of Saint-Quentin came from the banks of the Somme to the shores of the Seine that, to see the number of wagons laden with furniture and the number of men and women on horseback, it would not have been unnatural to imagine that a third part of the inhabitants was about to change its abode, as it generally does at a particular season of the year. Now, this was more than a simple change of residence: it was a flight; the capital was about to overflow on the provinces.

It is true that gradually, when it was seen that the news was not becoming more alarming, thanks to that precious organization with which the French nation is endowed beyond any other, and which enables it to laugh at everything, those remaining at Paris ridiculed those who left it; so that the fugitives slipped back without making any noise, and now, rendered more determined by the very mockery to which they had been exposed, appeared determined to hold out to the last extremity.

Such was the disposition in which Dandelot and Catherine, after crossing the barrier on the afternoon of the 28th of August, 1557, found the Parisians, to whom they brought news more dreadful than the battle of Saint-Laurent—namely, the surrender of Saint-Quentin.

The effect produced by news sometimes depends on the fashion in which it is spread.

"My friends," said Dandelot, addressing the first group of bourgeois he met, "glory to the inhabitants of Saint-Quentin! They have held out for nearly a month in a place where the bravest would hardly have promised to hold out for eight days; by this resistance they have given time to M. de Nevers to collect an army, to which his Majesty King Henri II. is every day sending reinforcements, and now her Majesty Queen Catherine has come among you to appeal to your patriotism for France and your love for your kings."

At these words Queen Catherine passed her head through the carriage window and cried—

"Yes, my friends, I come to announce to you, in the name of King Henri, that every city is ready to do its duty as Saint-Quentin has done. Illuminate your houses, then, as a token of the king's confidence in you, and of the love you bear him. This evening I will come to an understanding with your magistrates, M. Dandelot, and the Cardinal de Lorraine, as to the measures to be taken to repulse the enemy, who is already discouraged by the length of the siege before the first of our cities."

To announce in this way one of the most terrible pieces of information that the population of a capital has ever received, showed a wonderful knowledge of the multitude; and so it was Dandelot who had prepared both his own discourse and that of Catherine de Médicis.

The result was that the people who, if it had been simply said to them, "Saint-Quentin is taken and the Spaniards are marching on Paris!" would have disbanded and run howling in terror through the streets and crossways, "All is lost! let every one look out for himself!" began, on the contrary, to cry with all their might, "*Vive la reine Catherine! vive le roi Henri! vive le Cardinal de Lorraine! Vive M. Dandelot!*" and, pressing in crowds round the carriage of Queen Catherine, escorted them noisily and almost joyously from the Saint-Denis barrier to the palace of the Louvre.

On reaching the gate of the Louvre, Dandelot stood up again in his stirrups in order to command the innumerable crowd that thronged the square, the adjacent streets, and even the quays, and said in a loud voice—

"My friends, her Majesty directs me to tell you that in an hour she will be at the Hôtel de Ville, to which place your magistrates are summoned; she will ride there on horseback in order to be nearer to you, and by your great numbers she will judge of your love. Do not forget the torches and illuminations."

The answer was an immense hurrah; and the queen was able, from that moment, to be certain that all these people, whose goodwill she had won by a few words, were ready, like those of Saint-Quentin, to make every sacrifice, even that of their lives.

Catherine returned to the Louvre, accompanied by Dandelot; then the Cardinal de Lorraine was sent for at once, and ordered to convoke the magistrates of the city, the mayors and aldermen, the provosts of the merchants, and the syndics of the guilds, in the Hotel de Ville at nine o'clock in the evening.

We have seen that Dandelot was a skilful manager; he had selected that hour, in order to produce a certain effect.

Most of those assembled at the gate of the Louvre, in order to be sure of forming a part of the royal procession, and also to prevent any one from taking the first places from them, resolved not to stir from the posts in which they were; a few, however, consented to act as messengers of the masses, and were sent to purchase torches.

In another direction, those popular heralds who, in all great events, take unto themselves the functions of public criers, went along the streets leading from the Louvre to the Hotel de Ville, crying—

"Bourgeois of Paris, illuminate your windows; Queen Catherine de Médicis is about to pass, on her way to the Hotel de Ville!"

And at this appeal, in which there was nothing compul-

sory, but which, on the contrary, left to the bourgeois full freedom of action in every house situated on the route the queen was to take, every one began to bustle about, as in a vast hive, and to run in search of lamps, lanterns, and candles; and soon the windows testified to the general enthusiasm by the number of burning tapers and incandescent oils.

The criers, we say, went along the streets; for, with their instinctive intelligence, they saw clearly the queen would follow the line of the streets and not that of the quays; processions that follow the quays make a mistake in their itinerary, if they wish to evoke enthusiasm. Along the quays, enthusiasm follows them, but limping, like Justice; the riverside is necessarily dumb.

So, at the appointed hour, the queen, on horseback, between Dandelot and the Cardinal de Lorraine, accompanied by a poor suite of only a few persons, as was proper in the case of a queen appealing to her subjects under circumstances of dire calamity to royalty—the queen, we repeat, proceeded along the Rue Saint-Honoré as far as the Chateau d'Eau, followed the Rue Saint-Honoré to the Rue des Fourreurs, continued her course to the Rue Jean-Pain-Mollet, and came out on the Grève by the Rue de l'Epine.

This march, whose incidents might have made a funeral march of it, became a veritable triumph, recalling the famous proclamations of *the country in danger*, put on the stage three centuries later by the artist Sergent; but in the latter case, everything had been prepared beforehand; for Catherine, everything was improvised.

She had time, between four and nine in the evening, to send to Saint-Germain for the young dauphin. The pale and sickly child was in harmony with the drama; he was the phantom of that Valois dynasty soon to be extinguished in the richest posterity that ever king possessed, with the exception of King Priam. Four brothers! It is true that three of those brothers were probably poisoned, and the fourth assassinated!

But during the evening we are attempting to describe, the mysterious future was still hidden in the blessed obscurity that veils it from the eyes of men. Each was occupied only with the present, and, in fact, the present had enough to occupy the minds even of those who were most eager for excitement and emotion.

Ten thousand persons accompanied the queen; a hundred thousand formed a lane through which she passed; two hundred thousand, perhaps, gazed on her from the windows. Those who accompanied, and those who formed the lane, carried torches, the glare from which gave a light, less brilliant, it is true, but far more fantastic, than that of the day; the people following the queen shook their torches, the people in the windows shook their handkerchiefs or threw flowers.

All cried, "*Vive le roi! vive la reine! vive le dauphin!*"

Then, from time to time, as if a breath of menace or of death was stirring this multitude, a dull, heavy murmur was heard, accompanied by the clashing of swords against each other, the flashing of brandished knives, and the discharge of arquebuses.

The cries, which rose no one could tell where, and which were lost in the distance, were, "Death to the English! death to the Spaniards!" And these cries sent a shudder through the body of the bravest, for it was felt that they were the sign of the inveterate hatred of an entire nation.

The queen, the dauphin, and the procession, which had started from the Louvre at nine, did not reach the Hotel de Ville until half-past ten; during the whole passage it was necessary to force a way through the crowd, for, on the present occasion, there was literally not a single guard, not a single soldier on horse or foot to render the august riders any service in this direction. Any one, on the contrary, could touch the horses, the raiment, and even the hands of the queen and the heir to the throne. The people were very eager to touch these horses, which threatened to trample on them, those rich robes, which contrasted singularly with

their rags, those hands which were about to take from them their last sou; the contact made them cry with joy, when they ought to have groaned with sorrow!

It was amid these cries of joy and protests of devotion on the part of the entire population that the royal procession appeared on the Place la Grève, where the Hotel de Ville—a jewel of the Renaissance spoiled by the order of Louis Philippe, like all the monuments on which he has laid his inartistic hand—had just been built.

All the municipal magistrates, the provosts, syndics, and heads of corporations were waiting on the steps of the Hotel de Ville, or overflowing on the square, or standing under the gloomy vaults of the interior.

It took the queen, the dauphin, the Cardinal de Lorraine, and Dandelot a quarter of an hour to cross the square.

Never was Neronian circus illuminated more brilliantly, even on the nights when Christians, covered with sulphur and pitch, were burning: lights sparkled at every window; torches flared in every part of the square, along the quays, on the galleries, and even on the summits of Notre-Dame. The river seemed freighted with liquid fire!

The queen and the dauphin disappeared under the porch of the Hotel de Ville only to reappear almost immediately on the balcony.

These words which Catherine had said or had not said were repeated with enthusiasm, "If the father dies in your defence, my good people of Paris, I bring you his son!"

And at the sight of that poor little son, who was to be François II. of piteous memory, the people applauded, shouted, and yelled. The queen remained on the balcony to foster the enthusiasm, letting the Cardinal de Lorraine and Dandelot manage matters with the magistrates of the city of Paris.

She was right; they did manage them, and managed them well.

"They convinced," says the "History of Henri II.," by the Abbé de Lambert, "the magistrates and the chief bour-

geois of the city of Paris of the love and affection of the king, ready to sacrifice his life in order to remove the dangers threatening them; they assured them that, however crushing the disaster which France had just suffered, this disaster would not be irreparable if his Majesty found in his faithful subjects the zeal which the latter had always shown for the glory and interests of the state; they added that the king, in order not to burden his people, had not hesitated to pledge his own domains, but that, this resource having been exhausted, his Majesty could only reckon on the voluntary aid which the love of his subjects promised to afford him, and that the more pressing the need, the greater should be the efforts of the French people to enable their king to oppose an equal force to that of the enemy."

This discourse produced its effect: the city of Paris voted, during the sitting, three hundred thousand livres for the first expenses of the war, inviting the principal cities of the kingdom to contribute in proportion to their resources.

As to the means of prompt defence—and we know there was no time to be lost—this is what Dandelot proposed: first, the recall of the Duc de Guise and his army; it was a measure adopted long since, as our readers are aware, and messengers had already been despatched with this object; secondly, a levy of thirty thousand French soldiers and twenty thousand foreigners; and lastly, the men-at-arms and the light horse were to be doubled.

To meet those gigantic expenses, at a moment when the public treasury was empty, and when the domains of the king *were pledged*, this is what Dandelot suggested:

The clergy were to be requested to offer to the king a year's income, from all benefices without distinction, as a gift.

The nobles, although exempt from taxation by their privileges, were to tax themselves according to their several means.

And Dandelot, giving the example, declared that he re-

served for his own support and that of his brother only two thousand crowns, abandoning to the king the rest of his revenues as well as those of his brother.

In fine, the Cardinal de Lorraine, administrator of the finances, would draw up a plan for taxing the Third Estate according to its means. Poor Third Estate! they were equally careful not to tax it a year of its income, and not to give it the power to tax itself.

One part of these measures was voted with enthusiasm; the others were adjourned. It is hardly necessary to say that the measures adjourned were those making the clergy and nobles contribute their share of the expense of levying and supporting the troops needed.

However, it was decided immediately that fourteen thousand Swiss and eight thousand Germans should be enlisted, and that companies of all the young men capable of bearing arms should be formed in the provinces.

Indeed, the task accomplished on that evening was no slight one; at midnight everything was decided and finished.

Some minutes after, the queen descended the steps, holding the dauphin by the hand, who, though half asleep, graciously saluted the people with his little velvet cap.

At half-past one, Catherine returned to the Louvre, fully entitled to say, as did her fellow-countryman Mazarin a hundred years after, "They have shouted, they will pay!"

Oh people! people! still, it was this very weakness which revealed thy strength; it was prodigality of the blood and gold which revealed thy riches. Those who were crushing thee confessed it when they asked thee to pour the alms of thy blood and gold into the velvet cap of the heir to the throne.

X

IN THE SPANISH CAMP

WE HAVE seen what the Duc de Nevers was doing at Laon; we have seen what King Henri was doing at Compiègne; we have seen, in fine, what Queen Catherine, the dauphin, and the Cardinal de Lorraine were doing at Paris. We are going now to see what Philip II. and Emmanuel Philibert were doing in the Spanish camp, and how the time which was so well employed elsewhere was wasted there.

First, as we have said, the city of Saint-Quentin suffered all the consequences of its heroism, and was given up for five days to pillage. This city, which while alive saved France, continued to save it in its dying agony: the army which fell upon the poor dead city with such fury forgot that the rest of France was living, and, aroused by this spectacle, was organizing a desperate defence.

We shall, then, pass over these five days—days of conflagration, mourning, and desolation—it being our intention not to pause until we reach the 1st of September; and as, in a preceding chapter, we have told what aspect the city presented, we shall now tell, with the same exactness, what aspect the camp presented.

Since morning, everything had very nearly returned to its usual regularity. Each one counted his prisoners, examined his booty, took his inventory, and laughed over what he had gained, or smiled over what he had lost.

At eleven in the forenoon, a council was to be held under the tent of the King of Spain.

This tent was placed at the extremity of the camp; we

have explained why—the music of the French bullets being particularly disagreeable to the ears of Philip II.

We will begin with the important personages, and see what was passing under this tent.

The king was holding an open letter which a courier seated on a stone bench at the door of the royal tent had just brought him—this courier was covered with dust; a valet of the King of Spain was filling his glass, a common tavern one, with a golden wine whose color betrayed its southern origin.

The letter, which was adorned with a red wax seal, with arms surmounted by a mitre, appeared to have a singular interest for Philip II.

At the moment when, for the third or fourth time, he had read the important missive, the gallop of a horse, suddenly arrested at the door of his tent, made him raise his head, and, under the winking lids, the sombre eye seemed to be inquiring who was the person apparently so anxious to find himself in his presence.

Scarcely a few seconds had elapsed, when the tapestry at the entrance to the tent was raised, and one of those servitors who carried into the midst of the camp the etiquette of the palaces of Burgos and Valladolid announced:

"His Excellency Don Luis de Vargas, secretary of my lord the Duke of Alba."

Philip uttered a cry of joy; then, as if he was ashamed of this expression of emotion, he became at once silent, and in a voice in which it was impossible to distinguish any feeling, pleasant or unpleasant, he said:

"Let Don Luis de Vargas enter."

Don Luis entered.

The messenger was covered with sweat and dust; the paleness of his face was indicative of a long journey, and the foam which overspread his horse and moistened the inner side of his boots, showed the speed he had made to reach the king. And yet, when he was announced, he remained standing, with his hat in his hand, ten paces

from King Philip, waiting for a word to be addressed to him before he told his news.

This submission to the law of etiquette—the first of all laws in Spain—appeared to satisfy the king, and, with a smile faint as a sunbeam shining through a grayish autumn cloud, he said:

"God be with you, Don Luis de Vargas! What news from Italy?"

"Good and bad, sire, at the same time!" replied Don Luis. "We are masters of the situation in Italy; but the Duc de Guise is returning to France immediately with a part of the French army."

"It is the Duke of Alba who has sent you with this intelligence, is it not, Don Luis?"

"Yes, sire; and he ordered me to take the shortest route and make all haste, in order that I might be in France at least a dozen days before M. de Guise. Consequently, I embarked in a galley at Ostia, landed at Genoa, made my way through Switzerland, Strasbourg, Metz, and Mézières, and happily accomplished this journey in a fortnight, because I am sure it will take double that time for the Duc de Guise to reach Paris."

"Indeed, you have been very diligent, Don Luis, and I confess I do not see how you could have come in less time. But have you no private letter from the Duke of Alba for me?"

"He has not ventured, may it please your Majesty, to confide anything to me in writing, from a fear that I might be taken; but he has ordered me to repeat these words to you: 'Let his Majesty remember how King Tarquin dealt with the poppies that grew too high in his garden; nothing should grow too high in the garden of kings, not even princes.' Your Majesty, he added, would understand perfectly the significance of these words, and the fortune to which he alludes."

"Yes," murmured the King of Spain, "yes, there I recognize the prudence of my faithful Alvarez. Don Luis, I

understand, and am grateful. As for you, go and rest, and give orders yourself to my people to do all that is necessary for you."

Don Luis bowed, retired, and the tapestry fell behind him.

Let us leave Philip II. to meditate on the episcopal letter and on the verbal message of the Duke of Alba, and let us pass under another tent not further from this one than a musket-shot would carry.

It is the tent of Emmanuel Philibert. Emmanuel Philibert is bending over a camp bed on which a wounded man is lying. A physician is taking off the things needed for the cure of a wound which seems to be a contusion on the left breast, and yet, to judge by the paleness of the patient, is of a much graver character.

Nevertheless, after an inspection of the frightful ecchymosis, which looked as if it might have been produced by a rock hurled from an ancient catapult, the countenance of the physician cleared up.

The wounded man is our old friend Scianca-Ferro, whom we have not been able to accompany on the day of the great assault already described by us. We now find the brave squire under the tent of the Duke of Savoy, on that bed of pain which the soldier is taught to believe is a bed of glory.

"Well?" asked Emmanuel Philibert, anxiously.

"He is much better, much better," replied the doctor; "the wounded man is now out of danger—"

"I told you so, Emmanuel," interrupted Scianca-Ferro, in a voice he tried to render firm, but only succeeded in rendering strident. "In truth, you humiliate me in treating me as you would treat an old woman, and all on account of an insignificant contusion!"

"An insignificant contusion that has broken one rib, driven in two others, and made you spit blood every time you breathed for the last six days!"

"Yes, it's pretty safe to say that the implement was

used with effect. Hand me over the machine in question, Emmanuel."

Emmanuel searched for the *machine in question*, and picked up, in a corner of the tent, an object which was in fact a real machine, and a machine of war at that.

Vigorous as he was, the prince had great difficulty in raising it; but at last he laid it on the bed of Scianca-Ferro.

It was a twelve-pounder fitted to an iron bar; the whole might weigh from twenty-five to thirty pounds.

"*Corpo di Bacco!*" cried Scianca-Ferro, gayly, "a charming plaything that, you must admit, Emmanuel! And what has been done with the fellow who played with it?"

"No harm has been done to him, as you directed. He has been asked to pledge his word not to escape. He has done so, and he is likely to be as usual some paces from the tent, sighing and weeping, with his forehead in his hands."

"Ah! yes, poor devil! I cleaved the head of his brother down to the ears—a worthy German who swore hard, but struck harder. By my faith! if there had been ten like these two rascals at every breach, the struggle would have resembled that famous war of the Titans you told me of when you used to try to dig into my skull that abominable Greek which I never could abide, and you would have found Saint-Quentin as hard to scale as they did Pelion and Ossa!"

And then, listening for a moment:

"Eh! *mordieu!* Emmanuel, some one is trying to pick a quarrel with my honest Teuton—I hear his voice. It must be a devilishly serious affair, for I have been told that he has not opened his mouth for the last five days."

In fact, the noise of a quarrel reached the ears of the wounded man and those who surrounded him, and this noise had a treble accompaniment of oaths in Spanish, Picard, and German.

Emmanuel left Scianca-Ferro to the care of the doctors,

and, to please the wounded man, went to the door of the tent and made inquiries as to the cause of this quarrel, which had now degenerated into a regular engagement.

At the moment when, like unto the Neptune of Virgil, Emmanuel Philibert uttered the *quos ego* that was to calm the angry waves, the aspect of the field of battle was as follows.

In the first place—we ask pardon of our readers, but, as say the Picard peasants, whose acquaintance we are about to form—*saving the respect we owe them*, the principal hero of the skirmish was an ass.

A magnificent ass, it is true, loaded with cabbage, carrots, and lettuce, kicking and braying in wise it was wondrous to see and hear, and exerting the remainder of his energies in scattering the garden produce around him.

After the ass, the most important actor was, beyond contradiction, our friend Heinrich Scharfenstein, striking right and left with a tent pole which he had uprooted, and by the aid of which he had already knocked over seven or eight Flemish soldiers. A veil of profound melancholy was spread over his countenance; but, as we see, this melancholy in no way impaired the vigor of his arm.

After Heinrich, came a young and beautiful peasant girl, fresh and vigorous, who was giving it hot and heavy to a Spanish soldier, he having in all probability taken liberties by which her modesty was shocked.

Next, the probable proprietor of the ass, who was picking up the lettuce, carrots, and cabbage, all the while grumbling, for the soldiers around him were giving evidence of a great fondness for these dainties.

The presence of Emmanuel Philibert had, as we have seen, the effect of the head of Medusa on all the participants: the soldiers dropped the cabbage, lettuce and carrots they had already appropriated; the fair girl released the Spanish soldier, who fled with his mustache half torn out by the roots and a bloody nose; the ass stopped kicking

and braying. Heinrich Scharfenstein alone gave two or three blows with his pole, which knocked down two or three men; he was like some machine launched with too much force to be arrested at a mere signal.

"What is the matter?" asked Emmanuel Philibert, "and why are these brave men maltreated in such a fashion?"

"Ah! it's you, monseigneur; that's just what I'm going to tell you," said the peasant in the Picard *patois*, approaching the prince, holding as much cabbage, carrots, and lettuce in his arms as he could manage, and chewing the brim of his hat between his teeth, as if to render his language more intelligible.

"The deuce!" murmured Emmanuel; "I don't find it at all easy to comprehend what you say, my friend! I speak Italian like a native, Spanish passably, French the same, and a little German; but the Picard *patois* not at all."

"But I can tell you the fine way they have behaved to my ass—and my daughter, too!"

"My friends," said Emmanuel Philibert, "is there any one among you who can translate into French, Spanish, Italian or German the complaints of this man?"

"Into French, is it?—Why, my daughter Yvonnette has been at a boarding-school in Saint-Quentin, and can patter you French as well as our curé. Oh! now, isn't that fine? Speak, Yvonnette, speak!"

The young girl advanced timidly, trying to blush. "Monseigneur," said she, "excuse my father; but he belongs to the village of Pavy, where they speak only *patois*, and—you understand?"

"Yes," said Emmanuel, smiling, "I understand that I don't understand."

"In fact," grumbled the peasant, "they must be sillier than the dogs not to understand Picard!"

"Hush! father!" said the young girl.

Then, turning to the prince—

"This is what happened, monseigneur. Yesterday we heard in our village that all the fields round about had

been laid waste by the great battles fought on them, and that, on account of the fortress of Le Catelet, which still holds out for King Henri, preventing convoys reaching the camp from Cambrai, fresh provisions, and particularly vegetables, are absent from the table even of the king and from yours, monseigneur."

"Capital!" cried Emmanuel Philibert; "that's what I call speaking to the purpose! You are quite right, my fair child. Although we do not lack provisions, we have not the kind we want; vegetables, especially, are rare with us."

"Yes," returned the peasant, who apparently did not like to give up all share in the conversation; "as I was saying yesterday to our lass, 'Wench—'"

"My friend," interrupted Emmanuel, "supposing you let your daughter do the talking: we shall both be the gainers."

"Good! speak, lass, speak!"

"So, yesterday, my father said to himself: 'What if I were to take my donkey, and load him with cabbage, lettuce and carrots, and went to the camp with them, perhaps the King of Spain and the Duke of Savoy would not be sorry to have some fresh herbs to eat.'"

"I believe you, *pardie!* Our cow, and she's a beast not like any other, likes to have fresh herbs to eat, and why shouldn't a king and prince like to have the same?"

"If you were to speak for a long time, my friend," said Emmanuel, smiling, "I think I should understand you at the finish; but, if it is all the same to you, I prefer to converse with your daughter. Go on, child, go on!"

"Then, this morning, at daybreak," resumed the young girl, "we descended to the garden, cut our finest and freshest vegetables, loaded our donkey with them, and came here. Did we do wrong, monseigneur?"

"On the contrary, my child, your idea was a very good one."

"Faith! we thought so, monseigneur. But we were

hardly at the camp when your soldiers threw themselves on our poor ass. It was all very well for father to say, 'They are for the King of Spain! they are for the Duke of Savoy!' they paid no attention. Then, we began to cry and our ass began to bray; but in spite of Cadet's cries and our cries, we should have surely been plundered—to say nothing of what might have happened to me—if that brave man sitting yonder had not come to our rescue, and did the work you see."

"Yes, a rough piece of work!" said Emmanuel, shaking his head; "two men dead and four or five wounded for a few miserable vegetables! But no matter, his intention was good. Besides, he is under the protection of a friend of mine; so all is well."

"Then, monseigneur, we shan't meet with any misfortune on account of coming to the camp?" timidly asked the girl who was called Yvonnette by her father.

"Quite the contrary, my fair maid."

"Because we are very tired, monseigneur," continued the young girl, "having travelled five leagues to reach the camp, and we should rather not set out on our return until the heat of the day has passed."

"You shall go when you like," said the prince; "and as the good intention ought to be as well rewarded as the deed, in fact better than the deed, when possible, here are three crowns to make up for the trouble you had with your donkey."

Then, turning to some of his people whom curiosity had attracted thither—

"Gaetano," he said, "have these provisions placed in the cantina of the King of Spain, then give the best you have in the way of eating and drinking to these worthy people, and also see that nobody insults them."

When the hour for the meeting to be held under the tent of the King of Spain approached, and the leaders of the army were coming thither from all points of the camp, Emmanuel Philibert entered his to see whether the wound

of Scianca-Ferro was properly attended to, and—as this preoccupation engrossed his mind, he did not perceive the sarcastic smile exchanged between the peasant and his daughter and an ill-favored rascal who was advancing, all the time polishing furiously the armlets of M. de Montmorency's cuirass.

XI

IN WHICH YVONNET GATHERS ALL THE INFORMATION HE WANTS

THE pretext adopted by the Picard peasant and his daughter in order to enter the Spanish camp could not be better chosen, that is, supposing it was a pretext. We have seen how gratified was Emmanuel Philibert by the kindly intention of the kitchen gardener to bring vegetables for his own table and that of the King of Spain.

In fact, if we are to believe Mergey, a gentleman of M. de la Rochefoucauld, made prisoner at the battle of Saint-Quentin and brought to the Spanish camp the same evening, victuals were not abundant on the table of the Duke of Savoy. Mergey was at first reduced to water, which went against his nature, and made him very sad; it is true his master, Comte de la Rochefoucauld, was not better treated. "All the provisions they had for seven at table," says the unhappy man, in despair at being reduced to water, "was a morsel of beef about the size of your fist, and this they put in a pot of water without either salt, or lard, or herbs; then, when we were all at table, little tin saucers were filled with the said soup; then the little bit of meat was divided into as many slices as there were men at table, and there was very little bread with it." It will not be surprising, therefore, when the officers were forced to adopt such an abstemious diet, to find the soldiers, who were much worse off, throw themselves on the ass and its load of provisions, which they would doubtless have appropriated in spite of the efforts of Heinrich Scharfenstein, the peasant, and his

daughter, if Emmanuel Philibert, attracted by the noise, had not left his tent, and come as a pacifier to restore order.

Although placed under the special protection of Gaetano, the peasant and his daughter especially appeared to have all the difficulty in the world in recovering from the alarm they had just undergone. As for the donkey, his temper appeared to be less impressionable, and, once restored to liberty, he began joyously to devote his attention to the vegetables scattered all over the ground in the heat of the combat.

It was, then, only when they saw Emmanuel Philibert leave his tent and disappear in the direction of that of the king, that they seemed to regain a little self-control—although, after what had just passed, and seeing that the prince had been their protector, they might reasonably be expected to prefer his presence to his absence; but nobody took any notice of this anomaly except the furbisher of the constable's cuirass, who appeared to pay as much attention to the departure of the prince as the peasant and his daughter did.

As to Heinrich Scharfenstein, he was sitting on the same bench he had left to come to the aid of the two victims of the brutality of the Spanish soldiers, and had sunk again into the profound sadness that seemed to be devouring him.

Some curious persons still surrounded the peasant and his daughter, and evidently were embarrassing them by their presence, when Gaetano came to their relief and invited them to enter, and their donkey with them, into a sort of park surrounded by palisades behind the tent of the Duke of Savoy.

His object was to unload the ass of its precious burden, and to seek the provisions which Emmanuel, notwithstanding the general scarcity, had ordered to be placed at the disposal of the peasant and his daughter.

As soon as the wagon was unloaded, they received a loaf, a piece of cold meat and a pitcher of wine. It was, as can

be seen, more than was granted to Comte de la Rochefoucauld and the gentlemen prisoners with him.

So—doubtless not to expose themselves to fresh outrages from the greed of the soldiers—the peasant and his daughter left the park with extreme caution, looking to right and to left in order to see if the curiosity seekers were gone, and if those who had molested them were out of the way.

There was nobody on the field of battle, from which the dead and wounded had been carried off in presence of Emmanuel Philibert, except the furbisher of the constable, who was furbishing his armlet with more fury than ever, and Heinrich Scharfenstein, who had not stirred during the absence of the peasant and his daughter.

Yvonnette went to a little isolated shed, while, in recognition of the service done him by the giant, her father invited Heinrich Scharfenstein to do them the honor of partaking with them the lunch they owed to the munificence of the Duke of Savoy; but Heinrich merely shook his head, and murmured with a sigh:

"Since Franz died, I have no appetite!"

The peasant regarded Heinrich sadly, and, after exchanging a look with the furbisher, he joined his daughter, who had turned an old box into a table, and was awaiting the author of her days seated on a bundle of straw.

Hardly had they begun their repast when a shadow suddenly fell on the improvised table; it was that of the indefatigable furbisher.

"Plague take it!" he said; "what luxury! I have a mind to go and invite M. le Connétable to share it with us."

"Ah! by my faith, no!" said the peasant in excellent French; "he would eat the whole of our little pittance himself alone?"

"Without counting," said the young peasant girl, "that an honest woman runs great risk in the company of the old campaigner; at least, so I am told."

"Yes; and, of course, you are so much afraid of cam-

paigners, young or old! *Mordieu!* what a knock-down you gave the Spanish soldier who tried to kiss you! I suspected who you were at the beginning, but it was only when you cuffed him in that remarkable style that I recognized you. That's all very fine, but what object have you both, in the devil's name, in risking being hanged as spies by coming into the camp of these ragamuffins of Spaniards?"

"In the first place, to get some news about you, my dear Pilletrousse, and about your companions," said the young girl.

"You are too good, Mademoiselle Yvonnette, and if you will be kind enough to fill this third glass, which you seem to have intended for me, we shall drink, first to the health of your servant, which, as you see, is by no means bad, then to that of the rest of our companions, who unfortunately are by no means so well off as we are."

"And I," said Yvonnet—for doubtless our readers have recognized the adventurer, in spite of his disguise and the syllable to his name—"I am going to tell you the object which has brought me here; and you must do your best to help me to fulfil my mission."

While generously filling the wine-glass of Pilletrousse to the brim, Yvonnet waited anxiously for the news asked for.

"Ah!" said Pilletrousse, clacking his tongue in that fashion which, among intelligent drinkers is always a sort of funeral oration over the glass of wine they have drunk, especially when the wine is good; "ah! it warms one's heart to find an old friend again!"

"Are you speaking of the wine or of me?" asked Yvonnet.

"Of both. But, to return to our companions, Maldent here can give you all the information you desire about Lactance, Procope, and himself; for," added Pilletrousse, "I have heard that you were all buried alive together."

"Yes," returned Maldent; "and I must add, to my great regret, that we have stayed in the sepulchre two days longer than our Lord Jesus Christ."

"But you have left it with glory, that is the main point. Excellent Jacobins! By the way, how did they feed you while you were dead?"

"With their best, I must render them that justice; and never before were the dead, even in the case of the husband of the matron of Ephesus, the objects of such assiduous care."

"And did the Spaniards never pay you a visit in your cave?"

"We heard the echo of their steps two or three times on the stairs; but, on seeing that long file of sepulchres, they retired, and I believe, if we had taken it into our heads to raise the lids, they would have been more frightened than we were."

"Good! that accounts for three, and even for four, since I see you on your legs, and polishing the armor of the constable."

"You guess, don't you? Thanks to my knowledge of the Spanish language, I passed for a friend of the conquerors; then I slipped into the tent of M. de Montmorency, resumed my task, which had been interrputed a fortnight before, and as no one had troubled himself about my departure, no one troubled himself about my return."

"But what about Franz and Malemort?"

"Look at poor Heinrich weeping, and that will tell you what has become of Franz."

"How the devil could such a giant have been killed by one man?" asked Yvonnet, with a deep sigh; for our readers cannot have forgotten the tender friendship that united the two Germans to the youngest of the adventurers.

"And so," replied Pilletrousse, "it was not by a man he was killed, but by an incarnate demon named Brise-Fer, squire, friend, and foster-brother of the Duke of Savoy. The uncle and nephew were about twenty paces from each other, defending the eleventh breach, I believe. This Brise-Fer, otherwise Scianca-Ferro, attacked the nephew; poor Franz had already slain twenty men; he was a little

tired, and was too late to parry; the sword cleft his helmet and skull down to the eyes! and, it must be said in his praise, his skull was so thick that this diabolical Scianca-Ferro never could pull his sword out of the wound. It was while he was engaged in the effort to do so that Heinrich perceived what was passing, and, not being able to help his nephew in time, he hurled his mace at the enemy with all his might instead; the mace went straight to its mark, drove in the cuirass, the flesh, and it appears even the ribs. But it was too late; Franz fell on one side, and Bras de Fer on the other; only Franz fell without uttering a word, while Bras de Fer had time to say when falling: 'Let no harm be done to the man who has flung his club against my ribs. If I recover, I wish to cultivate the acquaintance of that worthy catapult.'' And he fainted; but his wish was sacred. Heinrich Scharfenstein was taken alive; this was not difficult, for when he saw his nephew fall, he went straight to him, sat down on the breach, drew the sword from the skull and placed the head on his knees, without paying any further attention to what was happening around him. Now, as he and his nephew were the last to hold out, when the nephew was dead and the uncle was seated the combat ceased; he was surrounded, summoned to surrender, and at the same time told that no harm would be done him. 'Shall I be separated from the body of my child?' he asked. He was told no. 'Well, then, I surrender; do with me what you like.' And in fact he surrendered, took the body of Franz in his arms, followed those who were conducting him to the tent of the Duke of Savoy, kept the body a day and a night, dug his grave on the border of the river, buried him, and, faithful to his word not to escape, returned to take his seat on the bench where you found him. But it is said that since the death of Franz he has neither eaten nor drunk.''

''Poor Heinrich!'' murmured Yvonnet; while Maldent, either because he had a less feeling heart, or did not care to let the conversation assume a mournful tone, asked:

"And about Malemort? I hope that this time he has ended in a manner worthy of himself!"

"Well," returned Pilletrousse, "you are mistaken; Malemort received two fresh wounds, which with the old ones makes up just twenty-six, and, as he was thought to be dead, he was thrown into the river. But it would seem the freshness of the water revived him; for, when I was watering the horse of M. le Connétable, I heard a poor devil groaning; I approached, and recognized Malemort."

"Who was only waiting for a friend in order to expire in his arms?"

"Not at all! Who was waiting for a shoulder to lean on and climb back to life, as the poet Fracasso might have said, the only one of us I cannot tell you anything about."

"Well," said Yvonnet with a shudder, "he has had the kindness to give me news of himself in person."

And Yvonnet related, not without turning pale, although it was full daylight, what had happened to him on the night of the 27th and 28th of August.

He was at the end of his narrative, when a great commotion announced that the conference which had been held under the king's tent was over.

All the leaders of the Spanish, Flemish, and English armies were in fact proceeding to their respective quarters, calling abruptly, like men in a hurry to transmit the orders they have received, to such of the soldiers of their army or such of their attendants as they met on their way;—all appeared to be in a very bad temper.

After a few moments, Emmanuel Philibert also was visible; like the others, he came out of the tent of the king, but he seemed to be in a still worse temper than they.

"Gaetano," he cried to his major-domo, as soon as he perceived him, "order the men to strike their tents; let the baggage be loaded and the horses saddled."

This injunction clearly pointed in the direction of a departure, but left our adventurers in the vaguest uncertainty as to the route which was to be followed. According to all

probability, Paris was threatened, but by what road did the enemy intend to march on Paris? Was it by Ham, Noyon, and Picardy, following the river Somme, or by Laon, Soissons, and the Isle-de-France, or by Chalons and Champagne? These three roads, we know—with the exception of some troops at Laon commanded by the Duc de Nevers, and the fortresses of Ham and La Fère, which could be easily turned—offered no obstacle to the Spanish army.

To know which of these routes the Spanish army would follow was the important point for Yvonnet.

Pilletrousse understood the urgency of the situation; he seized the pitcher of wine, emptied nearly two-thirds of it, then drank like one who had no time to lose, and started for the tent of the constable, in hopes he might learn something.

The two false peasants, under pretence of drawing their donkey away from the hubbub, where he was in danger of being taken for one of the beasts of burden of the Duke of Savoy's army, returned to the yard and waited—Maldent held Cadet by the bridle, and Yvonnet was seated astride on the pack-saddle, with a foot in each basket—until some indiscretion on the part of the servants might tell them what they wanted to learn.

They had not long to wait.

Gaetano rushed out quite scared to transmit to the muleteers, grooms, and hostlers the orders he had received; then, perceiving the peasant and his daughter—

"Ah! you are still there, good folk, are you?" he said.

"Yes," replied Yvonnette, the only one of the two who was supposed to understand French; "my father is waiting to learn where he is to bring his vegetables in future."

"Oh! it seems he finds my master a good customer! Well, let him come to Le Catelet, which we are going to besiege."

"Thanks, good sir," replied the peasant; "it will be a long road to travel; but no matter, we'll go all the same to Le Catelet."

"To Le Catelet!" repeated Yvonnet, in a whisper. "*Mordieu!* they are turning their backs on Paris! Precious tidings I have to announce to King Henri II.!"

Five minutes later, the two adventurers reached, by the help of the causeway, the left bank of the Somme; an hour after, Yvonnet flung off his woman's gown, and in the garb with which we are already acquainted galloped along the La Fère highway.

At three in the afternoon, he entered the chateau of Compiègne, waving his cap and shouting:

"Good news! rich news! Paris is saved!"

XII

GOD PROTECTS FRANCE

IN FACT, the moment that Philip II. and Emmanuel Philibert did not march immediately on Paris, France was saved.

How was it that such a fault had been committed? It was the consequence of the irresolute and suspicious character of the King of Spain, or rather the effect of the special favor which, in extreme circumstances, God always shows France.

Our readers will recall the letter King Philip was holding in his hand at the time Don Luis de Vargas, secretary of the Duke of Alba, arrived from Rome. This letter was from the Bishop of Arras, one of those counsellors in whom Philip, the least trustful of men, had most trust.

Philip II. had sent a courier to consult him as to what had better be done after the battle of Saint-Laurent, and also after the capture of Saint-Quentin, if Saint-Quentin, as seemed probable, fell into the hands of the Spaniards. The bishop, as was naturally to be expected, replied as a churchman, and not as a soldier.

Cardinal Granvelle, in the collection of his state papers, has preserved this letter for us—a letter that was to have such weight in the scale of the destinies of France.

We shall content ourselves with giving one passage. It is that which Philip was reading when Don Luis de Vargas entered.

"It would not be prudent to make any further attempts against the French during the remainder of the year, both the season and the nature of the country being obstacles in

the way: to do so would be to compromise the success already obtained, and the reputation of the Spanish arms. The best thing to do is to distress the enemy by burning and ravaging his territory beyond the Somme."

It was, therefore, the opinion of the Bishop of Arras, that, in spite of the victory of Saint-Laurent and the capture of Saint-Quentin, the King of Spain ought not to venture to penetrate further into the heart of France.

Though the advice of the Duke of Alba was more obscure in the eyes of others, it was not for that reason less clear in the eyes of Philip II.—

"Sire, remember how Tarquin struck down with his staff the highest poppies in his garden!"

Such was the advice of that captain-minister whose sombre genius was in such harmony with the terrible temper of the successor of Charles V. that the wrath of Heaven seems to have created Philip II. for the Duke of Alba, and the Duke of Alba for Philip II. Now, was not the poppy whose head was growing so high Emmanuel Philibert?

It is true that, if he grew great so rapidly, it was because he throve on battlefields, and glory watered his fortune; but the greater the prestige attached to the name of the Duke of Savoy, the more this prestige was to be dreaded.

If, after Saint-Laurent won, Saint-Quentin taken, they marched on Paris, and Paris fell into the hands of Emmanuel Philibert, what reward would be worthy of such a service? Would it be enough to restore to the son of Duke Charles the states that had been wrested from him? Moreover, was it for the interest of Philip II., who held a portion of them, that they should be restored? Once he was in possession of Piedmont, who could be sure that he would not take Milan, and, after Milan, the kingdom of Naples?—these two possessions of the Spanish crown in Italy, which, on account of the double claim France had to them, cost so much blood to Louis XII. and François I., without either having been able, we do not say to take, but to keep them. How did it come that neither Louis XII. nor François I. had

been able to keep them, though the one had taken Naples and the other Milan? It was because neither had any base of supplies in Italy; it was because they were forced to get all their succors from the other side of the Alps. But would this be so in the case of a prince who dwelt on the eastern slopes of the Alps and spoke the language of Naples and Milan? Might not this man, instead of being simply a conqueror in Italy, be her liberator?

This was the gigantic phantom, which, like the giant of the Cape of Storms, arose between Saint-Quentin and Paris.

Consequently, in opposition to the general advice, and particularly in opposition to the advice of Emmanuel Philibert, which was to march directly on the capital without giving Henri II. time to breathe, Philip declared that the victorious army should not take another step forward, and must be satisfied during this campaign with besieging Le Catelet, Ham and Chauny, while the walls of Saint-Quentin were to be raised and that city made the bulwark of the conquests from the French army.

This was the news—not in all its details, but in all its probabilities—which Yvonnet brought to Henri II., and which made him shout so confidently, "Paris is saved!"

On receiving these tidings, which however Henri could scarcely believe, new orders crossed each other in every sense, from Compiègne to Laon, from Laon to Paris, and from Paris to the Alps.

An ordinance was issued that all soldiers and gentlemen bearing arms or capable of bearing arms should repair to Laon and place themselves under the authority of the Duc de Nevers, Lieutenant-General of the King—an ordinance which seemed not so much a hardship to the persons concerned as an attack on the privileges of the nobility.

Dandelot was ordered to start for the little Cantons of Switzerland and enlist four thousand men whom it had been decided to enroll.

Two German colonels, Rockrod and Reiffenberg, led

through Alsace and Lorraine four thousand men levied by them on the banks of the Rhine.

It was known that eight thousand men of the army of Italy were returning across the Alps by forced marches.

At the same time—as if to reassure Henri, who, although the enemy were close to Noyon, did not leave Compiègne—it was learned that serious dissensions had broken out between the English and Spaniards at the siege of Le Catelet.

The English were exasperated by the haughty demeanor of the Spaniards, who claimed all the honor of the battle of Saint-Laurent and all the success of the siege of Saint-Quentin, and were insisting on withdrawing. This they did on the very day permission was granted them; for Philip II., in his partiality for his countrymen, always took their part, and had allowed the English to retire. Eight days afterward, the Germans mutinied, angered because Philip II. and Emmanuel Philibert had alone profited by the ransoms of the prisoners of Saint-Quentin. As a result of this dispute, three thousand Germans deserted the Spanish army, and, being promptly hired by the Duc de Nevers, passed from the service of the King of Spain to the service of the King of France.

The rendezvous of all these troops was the city of Compiègne, which M. de Nevers had carefully fortified, and under whose cannon he planned a camp capable of holding a hundred thousand men.

In fine, during the last days of the month of September, a sudden rumor ran through Paris that Duc François de Guise had arrived from Italy.

The next day, a magnificent cavalcade led by the duke himself, with the Cardinal de Lorraine on his right and M. de Nemours on his left, and behind him two hundred gentlemen wearing his colors, issued from the Hotel de Guise, proceeded to the boulevards, and, returning by the quays and the Hotel de Ville, aroused the Parisians to the highest pitch of enthusiasm, who believed that, now their beloved duke was returned, they had nothing more to fear.

The same evening, proclamation was made by sound of trumpet at all the crossways of the city that Duc François de Guise was appointed Lieutenant-General of the realm.

Perhaps, in acting as he did, Henri II. was forgetful of the advice of his father on his deathbed to make it the chief object of his reign not to let the House of Guise rise too high; but the situation was extreme, and this wise recommendation was neglected.

On the next day, which was the 29th of September, the duke set out for Compiègne, and at once began to fulfil the duties of his office by reviewing the troops gathered as if by miracle in the intrenched camp.

On the 10th of August preceding, there were not in the whole kingdom ten thousand men capable of bearing arms, including the garrisons of the cities; and these same men were so discouraged that, at the first cannon-shot, those of them in the open country were ready to fly, and those in the cities were ready to surrender; on the 30th of September, Duc François reviewed an army of nearly fifty thousand men; that is to say, an army larger by a third than the army of the King of Spain, since his rupture with the English and Germans. It was also a splendid army, full of enthusiasm, and begged to be led at once against the enemy.

Happy is that land in which it is only necessary to strike the earth, either in the name of the monarchy or the nation, for armed men immediately to spring up.

At last, it was learned on the 26th of October that King Philip, followed by the Duke of Savoy and all his court, had left Cambrai and returned to Brussels, regarding the campaign as finished.

Then, every one might not only cry, as Yvonnet had done on entering the courtyard of Compiègne, "Glorious news! Paris is saved!" but also, "Glorious news! France is saved!"

FOURTH PART

I

A RECOLLECTION AND A PROMISE

A YEAR had elapsed since King Philip II., by withdrawing from Cambrai to Brussels and declaring the campaign of 1557 terminated, made twenty-five millions of men exclaim joyfully, "France is saved!"

We have said what miserable considerations had, in all probability, prevented him from pursuing his conquests; we shall not be long in finding at the court of King Henri II. a fatal parallel to the selfish resolution which, as we have seen, was a source of such affliction to Emmanuel Philibert.

The vexation of the Duke of Savoy, on seeing himself brought to a halt on the right bank of the Somme, was the more grievous because he suspected the cause of the strange decision—a cause as insoluble in the eyes of modern historians as that of the famous halt of Hannibal at Capua was to ancient historians.

Moreover, there were other great events, which it is our duty to make known to our readers, accomplished the same year.

The most important of these events was, beyond all contradiction, the capture of Calais by the Duc de Guise. After that fatal battle of Crécy, which brought France as near destruction as that of Saint-Quentin had lately done, Edward III. attacked Calais by land and sea: by sea with a fleet of eighty sail, and by land with an army of thirty thousand

men. Although defended by a very small garrison, which, however, was commanded by Jean de Vienne, one of the bravest captains of the time, Calais did not surrender until after a siege of a year, and until the inhabitants had eaten the last morsel of leather to be found in the city.

Ever since that time—that is to say, for two hundred and ten years—the English, as they do to-day with regard to Gibraltar, devoted all their energies to the task of rendering Calais impregnable; and so strong was their belief that they had succeeded that they had caused the following inscription to be engraved above the principal gate:

Besieged for full three hundred and eighty days,
The Valois lost Calais, by England taken.
When lead that swims like cork astounds your gaze,
Then England's sway o'er Calais will be shaken.

Now this city, which the English had only taken after a siege of three hundred and eighty days from Philip of Valois, and which the successors of the victor of Cassel and vanquished of Crécy could only recover when lead swam on the water like a piece of cork, the Duc de Guise had carried in eight days, and that not by a regular siege, but by a sort of surprise.

After Calais, the Duc de Guise recovered Guines and Ham, while the Duc de Nevers retook Herbeumont; and in these four places the English had left three hundred brass cannon and two hundred and ninety of iron.

Perhaps our readers, when we speak of all those heroes who were doing their best to repair the losses of the preceding year, are rather surprised at not hearing us pronounce, we do not say the names of the constable and Coligny—we know they were prisoners—but the name of Dandelot, a name not less illustrious, and certainly not less French.

The name of Dandelot was, in fact, the only name that could presume to compete with that of the Duc de Guise, in view of the genius and courage of its bearer.

Such was the feeling of the Cardinal de Lorraine, entirely

absorbed by his devotion to the interests of his family, and so devoted to his brother that he was capable of everything, even of a crime, in order to get rid of any man who stood in the way of that glorious fortune.

Now, to share the friendship of the king and the gratitude of France with the Duc de Guise, was, in the opinion of the Cardinal de Lorraine, to stand in the way of the fortune of the haughty house whose representatives were soon to claim equality with the kings of France, and who, perhaps, would not have been contented with that equality, if, thirty years later, Henri III. had not annihilated by the agency of the poniards of the Forty-five the fortune elevated so high by the imprudence of Henri II.

The constable and admiral prisoners, one man alone, as we have said, disturbed the Cardinal de Lorraine; that man was Dandelot. From that moment, it was settled that Dandelot should disappear.

Dandelot belonged to the Reformed religion; and as he wished to attract his brother, who was still hesitating, to that opinion, he sent to Antwerp, where the King of Spain held him prisoner, certain books of Geneva, with a letter in which he urged him to abandon the Papal heresy for the light of Calvin.

This letter of Dandelot unfortunately fell into the hands of the Cardinal de Lorraine.

It happened at a time when Henri II. exercised the greatest rigors toward the Protestants. Dandelot had already been several times denounced to him as stained with heresy. But he had not believed in the accusation, or rather, perhaps, pretended not to believe in it, so hard did he find it to part from a companion who had been brought up along with him since he was seven years old, and who had just made such a return for the friendship of the king by great and real services.

But with such evidence of heresy before him as this letter, there was no longer room for doubt.

Still, the king declared that no proof, even though it

was in the handwriting of Dandelot, could have any value in his eyes, and he could only be convinced by a confession from the lips of the accused nobleman himself.

He therefore resolved to interrogate Dandelot as to his new belief in presence of all the court.

But, not wishing to take him by surprise, he invited the Cardinal de Chatillon, his brother, and François de Montmorency, his cousin, to bring Dandelot to the country residence of the queen near Meaux, where he was then staying, and at the same time to prevail on their relative to give such an answer as would exculpate him publicly.

The king was at dinner when the arrival of Dandelot was announced.

His reception of Dandelot was most gracious: he assured him he could never forget the services he had just rendered him; then, approaching the question of the reports that were spread abroad as to his opinions, he told him that he was accused not only of thinking, but of speaking evil of the mysteries of our holy religion; at last, expressing his thought still more plainly, he said—

"Dandelot, I command you to tell what is your opinion of the holy sacrifice of the Mass."

Dandelot knew in advance that an expression of his views would pain the king excessively, and as he had a great respect as well as a profound affection for Henri, he said humbly:

"Sire, can you not dispense a subject so profoundly devoted to his king as I am from answering a question of pure belief, with regard to which, great and powerful though you be, you have no more competency than other men?"

But Henri had not come there with the intention of giving way; he therefore ordered Dandelot to answer categorically.

Thereupon, seeing there was no means of eluding the question—

"Sire," replied Dandelot, "penetrated with the liveliest

gratitude for all the favors I have received from your Majesty, I am ready to expose my life and sacrifice my property in your service; but, since you force me to confess it, in matters of religion I recognize no master but God, and my conscience does not permit me to disguise my sentiments from you. Consequently, sire, I do not fear to proclaim that the Mass has not only no warrant from our Lord Jesus Christ or from his Apostles, but is a detestable invention of men."

At this horrible blasphemy, regarded by the rigid Huguenots as a truth that could not be confessed too loudly, the king started with amazement, and passing from amazement to anger—

"Dandelot!" he cried, "until now I defended you against those who attacked you; but, after such abominable heresy, I order you to leave my presence, and I declare that, if you were not in a certain sense my pupil, I would pass my sword through your body."

Dandelot remained perfectly calm, bowed respectfully, and, without replying to this terrible apostrophe, retired.

But Henri did not preserve the same coolness. No sooner did the tapestry at the door of the dining-hall fall behind Dandelot, than he ordered La Bordaisière, the master of his wardrobe, to arrest the culprit at once, and conduct him as a prisoner to Meaux.

The order was executed, but this was not enough for the Cardinal de Lorraine; he insisted that the post of colonel-general of the French infantry should be taken from him and given to Blaise de Montluc, who was devoted to the house of Guise, having been page to René II., Duc de Lorraine.

Such was the reward of Dandelot for the immense services he had just rendered the king, and which the king had promised never to forget.

We know what happened later on to his brother, Admiral Coligny.

This was the reason why the name of Dandelot was not

uttered among those names which aroused enthusiasm as victory after victory was reported.

On the other hand, neither was Emmanuel Philibert inactive; he was making a vigorous struggle against this supreme effort of France.

The battle of Gravelines, won by Count Lamoral d'Egmont, who defeated Maréchal de Termes, was one of those days which France had to inscribe among the number of her unfortunate days.

Then, as in those private combats in which, after fighting with equal success for a time, two adversaries worthy of each other take a step backward in silence, both feeling equally fatigued, and rest on the hilt of their swords, eye riveted on eye the while, so France and Spain, Guise and Emmanuel Philibert, took time to breathe—the Duc de Guise at Thionville, Emmanuel Philibert at Brussels.

As to King Philip, he commanded in person the army of the Low Countries, consisting of thirty-five thousand infantry and fifteen thousand cavalry, encamped on the river Anthée. It was there he learned of the death of his wife, Queen Mary, who had just expired, owing to dropsy, which she persisted in mistaking for pregnancy.

The principal army of France was, on the other hand, intrenched behind the Somme, and, like the Spanish army and its leaders, was for the moment inactive. It was made up of sixteen thousand French, eighteen thousand reiters, twenty-six thousand German fantassins, and six thousand Swiss; we are told by Montluc that when in battle array it occupied a league and a half, and that to make the tour of it required three hours.

Finally, Charles V., as we have stated in the first part of this work, died on the 21st of September, 1558, at the monastery of Saint-Just, in the arms of the Archbishop of Toledo.

And as the events of this earth are full of contrasts, the young queen, Mary Stuart, aged fifteen, had just married the dauphin, aged seventeen.

Such was the condition of public and private affairs in France, Spain, and England, and consequently in the world, when one morning, in the month of October, 1558, Emmanuel—who, clad in that mourning of which Hamlet speaks, the mourning that extends from the raiment to the heart, was giving some military orders to Scianca-Ferro, now entirely cured of his wound and about to be despatched as a courier to King Philip—saw Leona enter his cabinet, beautiful and radiant as ever in her usual costume, but unable to veil a deep tinge of melancholy under her smiling aspect.

We have seen the fair young girl disappear during the terrible French campaign which was finished at the close of the preceding year. In fact, in order not to expose her to the fatigues of camp, battles, and sieges, Emmanuel Philibert insisted on her remaining at Cambrai; then, the campaign over, the two lovers came together again, with a greater happiness and a deeper love than ever, and as, from weariness or disgust, Emmanuel Philibert took little part in the campaign of 1558, which he directed from Brussels, the two lovers were rarely asunder.

Accustomed to read even the most secret thoughts of Leona on her countenance, Emmanuel Philibert was struck by the shade of sadness which almost quenched the forced smile of the young girl.

As to Scianca-Ferro, less clever than his friend in reading the mysterious secrets of the heart, he saw in the entrance of Leona only her daily appearance in the cabinet of the prince; and, after shaking the hand of the handsome page—whose sex was no longer a secret for him—in a fashion half-respectful, half-friendly, he took the despatch he was to carry to King Philip; he left carelessly humming a Picard song and jingling his spurs as he passed along.

Emmanuel Philibert followed him with his eyes to the door, and when the young man disappeared, he gazed anxiously on Leona.

Leona continued to smile; she was standing, leaning on

an armchair, as if, without some support, her legs would have refused to sustain her. Her cheeks were pale, and the tears, which she had not wholly wiped away, shone in her eyes.

"My dear child, what has happened to you this morning?" in tones of that paternal tenderness which marks the passage of the lover from adolescence to manhood.

In fact, on the 8th of July, 1558, Emmanuel Philibert was just thirty years old. Protected by misfortune, which forced him to become a great man—he might not have become such if he had inherited his great states without contest or opposition—Emmanuel Philibert, at the comparatively early age of thirty, had acquired a military reputation that was fully on a level with the first military reputations of the epoch: namely, that of the constable, the Duc de Guise, the admiral, and old Marshal Strozzi, who had died so gloriously at the siege of Thionville.

"I have," said Leona, in her harmonious voice, "a memory to recall and a request to make."

"Leona knows that if my memory is at fault, my heart is faithful. Let us first see what the request is."

And, at the same time, he summoned an usher, and ordered that he should not be interrupted by any person whatever. He then made a sign to Leona to be seated on a pile of cushions near him, which was the usual seat of the young girl when conversing with her lover.

Leona took her accustomed seat; and, resting her elbows on the knees of Emmanuel, with her face between her hands, her eyes gazed into his with a look of infinite sweetness, in which might be read, not only boundless love, but boundless devotion.

"Well?" he said, with a smile that betrayed anxiety, just as that of Leona betrayed sadness.

"What day of the month is to-day, Emmanuel?" asked Leona.

"The 17th of November, if I am not mistaken," replied the duke.

"Does not this anniversary recall, my dearest prince, an anniversary which deserves to be celebrated?"

Emmanuel smiled more frankly than at first, for his memory had now strayed back to the past, and revived every detail of the event to which Leona alluded.

"Twenty-four years ago, on this very day and almost at this very hour," said he, "carried away by my horse, which had been startled by the sight of a furious bull, I found, a hundred yards from the village of Oleggio, on the border of a little stream flowing into the Ticino, a dead woman and a child that was almost dead. This child I had the happiness to restore to life was my beloved Leona!"

"Have you ever had for a single day any reason to regret that meeting, Emmanuel?"

"On the contrary, I have blessed Heaven every moment the remembrance of it has occurred to my memory," replied the prince; "for this child has become the guardian angel of my happiness."

"And if, for the first time, I asked you to make me a promise, Emmanuel, would you think me too obtrusive, and would you refuse my request?"

"You trouble me, Leona!" said Emmanuel. "What request can you possibly make that is not granted on the instant?"

Leona grew pale, and, in trembling tones, while at the same time she seemed to be listening to some distant sound, she said:

"Swear to me, Emmanuel, by the glory of your name, by the motto of your house, *God remains to him who lacks everything*, by the solemn promise made to your dying father, that you will grant what I ask!"

The Duke of Savoy shook his head like a person who feels that some great unknown sacrifice is about to be accomplished, but is also convinced that this sacrifice will be to the profit of his honor and fortune.

Then, solemnly raising his hand—

"All you ask, Leona," he said, "shall be granted, provided you do not ask me never to see you again."

"Oh!" murmured Leona, "I suspected you would not swear without making some restriction. Thanks, Emmanuel! Now, what I request, nay, what I demand, in virtue of the oath you have just taken, is that you do not oppose on any personal grounds the peace between France and Spain, the articles of which my brother is coming to submit to you in the name of King Philip and King Henri."

"The peace!—your brother! How do you know what I am ignorant of, Leona?"

"A powerful prince thought he had need of the services of your humble servant, Emmanuel, for the purpose of influencing you in a certain direction; and that is the reason I know what you do not know yet, but which you are sure to know before long."

Then, as a great noise of horses was heard in the square of the Hotel de Ville, and under the cabinet of the prince, Leona rose and gave orders to the usher, in the name of the Duke of Savoy, to admit the leader of the cavalcade.

A moment after, while Emmanuel was holding the arm of Leona, who wished to withdraw, the usher announced—

"His Excellency Comte Odoardo Maraviglia, envoy of their Majesties the Kings of Spain and France."

"Let him enter," replied Emmanuel, in a voice that trembled almost as much as that of Leona had done a few moments before.

II

THE ENVOY OF THE KINGS OF SPAIN AND FRANCE

OUR readers have recognized the brother of Leona by the name which has just been announced—that young man condemned to death for attempting to assassinate the murderer of his father, and yet recommended to Philip II. by Charles V. on the very day of his abdication.

Our readers will also recall that, although Leona recognizes in Odoardo Maraviglia a brother, the latter is far from suspecting that Leona, of whom he has barely caught a glimpse under the tent of Emmanuel at Hesdin, is his sister.

The Duke of Savoy and his page are the only ones who know the secret which has saved Odoardo's life.

Now, how did it happen that Odoardo became the mandatory of Philip and Henri at the same time? This we will explain in a few words.

Son of an ambassador of François I., reared among the royal pages of Henri II. when the latter was dauphin, publicly adopted by Charles V. on the day of his abdication, Odoardo enjoyed equal favor at the courts of France and Spain.

It was known, moreover, although no person was acquainted with the details of that event, that it was to Emmanuel Philibert he owed his life.

It was, then, quite natural that those interested in bringing about a peace should have conceived the idea of having the man who had at once the ear of the King of Spain and the King of France take charge of the preliminaries, and

that, when the chief articles had received the sanction of the two sovereigns, the same man should have been sent to Emmanuel Philibert to prevail on him to adopt these same articles; especially after the report spread that Odoardo Maraviglia not only owed his life to the intercession of Emmanuel Philibert, but also his recommendation by Charles V. to Philip II., and the extraordinary favors he received from the Spanish court.

Nor had those who conceived the idea of thus bringing Odoardo to the front made a mistake.

The preliminaries of the peace—a peace equally desired by Philip and Henri—were arranged with more promptitude than is usual in affairs of such importance; and, although the reason for Emmanuel Philibert's sympathy with the son of François I.'s ambassador was unknown, it was correctly thought that no more agreeable messenger could be sent to the Duke of Savoy.

He rose, therefore, and, in spite of the reflection that there was for him a private sorrow at the bottom of this great political event, he offered his hand to Odoardo, who kissed it respectfully.

"Monseigneur," he said, "you see in me a very happy man; for I am about to prove in the future as perhaps I may have done in the past, that your Highness has saved the life of a grateful man."

"Your life has been really saved, my dear Odoardo, by the generosity of the noble Emperor for whom we are both in mourning. I have been but the humble instrument of his clemency."

"Be it so, monseigneur; but for me you have been the visible messenger of the heavenly favor. I must, therefore, worship you, as the ancient patriarchs did the angels who announced to them the will of God. For that matter, monseigneur, I also am sent as a messenger of peace to you."

"It was as such you were announced, Odoardo, it was as such you were expected, and it is as such that I receive you."

"I was announced? you expected me? Pardon me, monseigneur, but I believed I was the first to announce my presence to you by my presence itself; and as to the proposals I was charged to lay before you, they were so secret—"

"Don't be disturbed, M. l'Ambassadeur," said Emmanuel, forcing a smile. "Have you not heard that certain men have their familiar demon, who warns them of the most hidden things in advance? I am one of those men."

"Then," said Odoardo, "you know the motive of my visit?"

"Yes; but the motive only, not the details."

"I am ready, when your Highness desires, to lay those details before you."

And Odoardo, bowing, made a sign to indicate that they were not alone.

Leona saw the sign, and was about to retire; but the prince detained her.

"I am always alone when I am with this young man, Odoardo," said he; "for this young man is the familiar demon of whom I spoke just now. Remain, Leone; remain!" added the duke. "We ought to know all that may be proposed. I am listening; speak, M. l'Ambassadeur."

"What would you say, monseigneur, if, in exchange for Ham, Le Catelet, and Saint-Quentin, I were to announce to your Highness that France restores you a hundred and thirty-eight cities?"

"I would say," replied Emmanuel, "that it is impossible."

"And yet it is true, monseigneur."

"And is Calais among the cities to be restored by France?"

"No. The new Queen of England, who, under pretence of religious scruples, refuses to marry the husband of the late queen, her sister Mary, has been a little sacrificed in all this. However, it is only on certain conditions that France

keeps Calais and the other cities of Picardy taken by M. de Guise from the English."

"What are those conditions?"

"The King of France must restore them at the end of eight years, if he does not prefer to pay fifty thousand crowns to England."

"He will give them, unless he is as poor as Baudouin, who pledged the crown of our Lord!"

"Oh! it was a sort of satisfaction it was thought as well to give to Elizabeth, and with which she was, luckily, well contented, having considerable trouble at present with the Pope."

"Has he not declared her a bastard?" inquired Emmanuel.

"Yes; and it will cost him his supremacy over England. Elizabeth has retorted by declaring all the edicts published by the late Queen Mary in favor of the Catholic religion abolished, and has re-enacted all the measures of Henry VIII. and Edward VI. against the Pope; and, like these two sovereigns, she has added to her royal prerogatives the title of supreme head of the Church."

"And what is France doing with the little Queen of Scotland in the midst of this great quarrel?"

"Henri II. has declared Mary Stuart Queen of Scotland and England, as heiress of the late Queen Mary Tudor, as sole descendant of James V., grandson of Henry VIII., King of England, and in virtue of the illegitimacy of Elizabeth, declared a bastard by an act which has never been repealed."

"Yes," said Emmanuel Philibert; "still, there is a will of Henry VIII. which declares Elizabeth heiress to the crown, in default of Mary and Edward, and the Act of Parliament proclaiming Elizabeth queen was based on this document. But, if you please, let us return to our own affairs, M. l'Ambassadeur."

"Well, monseigneur, these are the principal conditions of the treaty, the bases on which it is proposed to establish it:

" 'The two kings—the King of Spain and the King of France—will labor conjointly to restore peace to the Church by using their efforts to have a general council summoned.

" 'There will be an amnesty for all who may have embraced the interests of either sovereign, except for those who have been banished from Naples, Sicily, and Milan: these are exeluded from the general pardon.

" 'It is stipulated further that the cities and all the fortresses taken by Franee from the King of Spain, and particularly Thionville, Marienbourg, Ivoy, Montmédy, Damvilliers, Hesdin, the county of Charolais, and Valence in La Loménie, shall be restored to the said King of Spain.

" 'That Ivoy shall be dismantled, in compensation for the destruction of Thérouanne.

" 'That King Philip shall marry the Princess Elisabeth of France, and shall receive with her a dowry of four hundred thousand crowns.

" 'That the fortress of Bouillon shall be restored to the Bishop of Liège.

" 'That the Infante of Portugal shall be put in possession of the property inherited by him from Queen Eleonora, his mother, widow of Franeis I.

" 'Finally, that the two kings shall restore to the Duke of Mantua all they have taken from him in Montferrat, and shall leave standing whatever citadels they may have built there.' "

"And are all these conditions granted by the King of France?" asked Emmanuel.

"All. What do you say to them?"

"I say that the whole thing is marvellous, M. l'Ambassadeur; and if this has been brought about by your influence, the Emperor Charles V., when he reeommended you to his son Don Philip at the time of his abdieation, did a remarkably wise action."

"Alas, no, monseigneur!" returned Odoardo; "the two prineipal agents of this strange peace are Madame de Valentinois, who is disturbed at seeing the glory of the House of Guise and the influence of Queen Catherine increase, and M. de Montmorency, who is afraid that, while he is a prisoner, the Lorraines may destroy the power of his family."

"Ah!" said Emmanuel, "now I see why the constable asked permission from King Philip so often to pass into France, and why he has requested me to accept a ransom of two hundred thousand crowns for himself and the admiral—a request I have just submitted to the king, through the agency of my squire Scianca-Ferro, who left here a short time before you arrived."

"The king will surely be very ungrateful if he does not grant that request," replied the ambassador.

Then after a moment's silence, and looking at the prince—

"But you, monseigneur," he said, "do not ask what has been done for you."

Emmanuel felt the hand of Leona tremble in his own.

"For me?" answered the prince. "I was hoping they had forgotten me."

"To do so, King Philip and King Henri would have had to select a different negotiator from him whose life you have saved, monseigneur. Oh, no, no, thank God! Providence has been just this time, and the conqueror of Saint-Quentin will be recompensed to the full."

Emmanuel exchanged a sorrowful look with his page, and waited.

"Monseigneur," said Odoardo, "all the strong places on both sides of the Alps are restored to you, with the exception of Turin, Pignerol, Chieri, Chivas, and Villeneuve, which are to remain in possession of France until the day when your Highness has a male heir. Moreover, until the birth of this heir, who will be the means of bringing to a close that great lawsuit between Louise of Savoy and Piedmont, the King of Spain is allowed to garrison Asti and Verceil."

"Then," said Emmanuel, quickly, "if I do not marry?"

"You lose five cities so magnificent that a prince might be content with them alone."

"But," said Leona, with equal quickness, "monseigneur, the Duke of Savoy will marry. Would your Excellency

have the goodness to bring the matter to an end by telling the prince what alliance is intended for him?"

Odoardo regarded the young man with astonishment; then his eyes turned to the duke, whose countenance expressed the most cruel anxiety.

"Oh, reassure yourself, monseigneur," said he; "the wife destined for you is worthy of a king."

And as the pale lips of Emmanuel continued shut, instead of opening to put the question Odoardo was expecting, the latter added:

"It is Madame Marguerite of France, sister of King Henri II.; and besides the entire duchy of Savoy, she brings her fortunate husband a dowry of three hundred thousand crowns of gold."

"Madame Marguerite of France," murmured Emmanuel, "is a great princess, I know; but it has always been my determination, monsieur, to regain my duchy by arms, not by marriage."

"But," said Odoardo, "Madame Marguerite is a worthy reward for your victories, and not many princes have had the good fortune to obtain the hand of a king's daughter and sister in return for a battle gained and a city captured."

"Oh," murmured Emmanuel, "why did I not break my sword at the beginning of this campaign!"

Then, as Odoardo was regarding him with amazement—

"Would your Excellency be so good," said Leona, "as to leave me for a moment alone with the prince?"

Odoardo continued dumb, but his eyes were questioning those of Emmanuel.

"Only for a quarter of an hour," persisted Leona, "and in a quarter of an hour your Excellency will receive the answer you desire."

The duke made a gesture in the negative, at once checked by a mute, appealing movement of Leona.

Odoardo bowed and withdrew. He had seen that the mysterious page alone could vanquish the incomprehensible

resistance with which the Duke of Savoy seemed resolved to meet the wishes of the kings of France and Spain.

After a quarter of an hour, an usher again summoned Maraviglia into the presence of the Duke of Savoy.

Emmanuel Philibert was alone.

Sad, but resigned, he offered his hand to the envoy.

"Odoardo," he said, "you may return to those who sent you and tell them that Emmanuel Philibert accepts gratefully the favors which the kings of France and Spain are about to bestow on the Duke of Savoy."

III

IN THE APARTMENTS OF THE QUEEN

THANKS to the skill of the negotiator, a man gifted with all the diplomatic skill which is supposed to be one of the characteristics of the Florentine and Milanese race; thanks especially to the interest the two kings had in keeping the matter religiously secret—nothing, except a few of those vague reports that always accompany great events, had leaked out at court so far regarding the great projects lately communicated by Odoardo Maraviglia to the Duke of Savoy, projects that were to cost France so dear.

Great astonishment, therefore, was excited, when two horsemen, each attended by a squire, and each coming from an opposite direction, met at the gates of the Louvre, four days after the interview we have just related, and recognized each other, the one as the Connétable de Montmorency, who was believed to be a prisoner at Antwerp, the other as the Duc de Guise, who was believed to be in the camp of Compiègne.

These two furious enemies did not spend much time in paying compliments. As an imperial prince, the Duc de Guise took precedence of the entire French nobility. M. de Montmorency therefore made his horse take a step backward, and the Duc de Guise made his take a step forward; so that it would almost have looked as if the constable was merely the squire of some gentleman in the suite of the prince, if, on entering the Louvre—where the king resided in winter—one had not gone to the right, and the other to the left.

One, the Duc de Guise, was about to visit Queen Catherine de Médicis; the other, the constable, was about to visit Diane de Poitiers. Both were expected with equal impatience.

We will, with the reader's permission, accompany the most important of our characters on his way to the most important, in appearance at least, of the two women we have just named; that is to say, the Duc de Guise on his way to the queen.

Catherine de Médicis was a Florentine; the Guises were Lorrainers. It was not astonishing, therefore, that, on the arrival of the fatal news of the battle of Saint-Quentin, Catherine and the cardinal, who saw their own influence lowered by that which the post of commander-in-chief naturally gave to the constable, had but one single idea; and that idea was not that this battle brought France within an inch of destruction, but that the capture of the constable and one of his sons would ruin the credit of the Montmorencys. Now, by a natural game of seesaw, political and military in its character, when the credit of the Montmorencys was down, the credit of the Guises was up.

So, as we have seen already, the whole civil administration of the realm was confided to the hands of the Cardinal de Lorraine, while Duc François de Guise, who had been expected to come as a savior from Italy, had on his arrival concentrated the entire military power in his hands, with the title of Lieutenant-General of the Kingdom.

We saw, moreover, what use the Duc de Guise made of this power: the army reorganized, Calais restored to France, Guines, Ham and Thionville taken by storm, Arlon surprised—such had been the result of a single campaign.

The duke had just been delighting himself with an immense dream of ambition likely enough to be realized, indeed, one of the pleasantest dreams a Guise could entertain, when he was awakened from it by a vague rumor.

People were talking of the return of the constable to Paris; now this return, if it took place, might be regarded as the preliminary to a treaty of peace.

The effect of this simple rumor on the duke was to make him quit the camp of Compiègne directly; when he reached Louvres, half-way on the road to the capital, he met a special messenger sent by his brother to bid him come to Paris as soon as he possibly could. The messenger had no other instructions for him; but the duke, from previous information, suspected why he was summoned.

When he met M. de Montmorency at the entrance to the Louvre, he had no longer any doubt; M. de Montmorency was free, and peace, in all probability, would be the consequence of this unexpected freedom.

M. de Guise had believed the captivity of the constable would be an everlasting captivity, like that of King John: the disappointment was cruel.

M. de Montmorency had lost everything; M. de Guise had saved everything, and yet the vanquished was about to appear at court on the same footing as the victor. And who knows but that, thanks to the protection of Madame de Valentinois, the vanquished would enjoy the greater favor?

These were the thoughts that darkened the visage of the Duc de Guise at the moment he was mounting the stairs leading to the apartments of Queen Catherine; while, on the contrary, the constable was mounting, with joyous countenance, the stairs leading to the apartments of Diane de Poitiers, at the other side of the court.

The duke was evidently expected; for, as soon as his name was announced, the tapestry of the queen's room was raised, and the voice of Catherine was heard crying in her hoarse Florentine accent—

"Enter, M. le Duc! enter!"

The queen was alone. Duc François looked around as if he expected to find some one with her.

"Ah, yes!" exclaimed Catherine, "you are looking for your brother, are you not?"

"Does your Majesty know," he said, omitting the usual compliments as unsuitable to the situation, "that my brother sent me a messenger with directions for me to come at once to Paris?"

"Yes," said Catherine; "but as the messenger only started at one in the afternoon, we did not expect you until evening, or indeed until late in the night."

"Ah, it was because the messenger met me half-way."

"And what was bringing you back to Paris?"

"My anxiety."

"Duke," said Catherine, abandoning her usual artifices for the nonce, "you have good cause for anxiety; for never was anxiety better founded."

At that moment, the noise of a key grating in one lock, then in a second, was heard; the door of a private entrance, opening on the corridors of the queen, was pushed aside, and the cardinal appeared.

Without taking time to salute his brother, and as if he was in the chamber of a princess of his own rank, or even of inferior rank, he marched straight up to Catherine and François, and with a change in his voice that denoted the importance of his tidings, said—

"Do you know who has just arrived? Do you know?"

"Yes," replied Duc François, who guessed to whom the cardinal alluded; "I met him at the door of the Louvre."

"Whom do you say?" asked Catherine.

"The constable," replied both together.

"Ah!" groaned Catherine, as if she had received a stab in the heart. "But perhaps he has returned to stay only a few days, as on other occasions."

"No!" returned the cardinal. "He returns for good; he and the admiral have, through the interposition of the Duke of Savoy, been ransomed for two hundred thousand crowns—a sum he will surely compel the king to pay. By the cross of Lorraine!" continued the cardinal, angrily bit

ing his mustache, "an ordinary gentleman would never have been able to pay for the consequences of Montmorency's stupidity; and if it were estimated as it deserves, the Colignys, Montmoreneys and Dandelots would be ruined by the assessment."

"But what have you learned, on the whole," said Catherine, "more than we know?"

"Not much; but I am expecting every moment your old messenger, M. de Nemours," said Charles de Lorraine, turning to his brother. "M. de Nemours is a member of the House of Savoy; he is not suspected of belonging to our party, and as the wind is blowing at this moment from the direction of Piedmont, perhaps he may bring us fresh news."

At this moment there was a respectful tap on the door by which the Cardinal de Lorraine had lately entered and which he had locked behind him.

"Ah!" said Charles de Lorraine, "it is he probably."

"Open, then," said Catherine.

And not caring what those who saw the key of her chamber in the hands of the Cardinal de Lorraine might think of the matter, she pushed the cardinal toward the door.

It was in fact the same Duc de Nemours whom we have seen already introduced into Catherine's apartment by Charles de Lorraine a year and a half ago, on the morning when the king and a portion of the court were hunting in the forest of Saint-Germain.

He was neither as anxious as Duc François, nor as familiar as his brother; therefore he was about to salute Catherine according to the rules of the most scrupulous etiquette, but the latter did not give him time.

"M. le Duc," she said, "our dear cardinal tells us that you have probably news for us. Speak. What do you know of this wretched peace?"

"Why," replied Nemours, "I can give you full information, and that from the best source; I have just left the

negotiator, Odoardo Maraviglia, who had himself just left the Duke of Savoy."

"Then you must be well informed," said Charles de Lorraine, "for Duke Emmanuel of Savoy is the party chiefly interested in this game, since his principality is the stake."

"Well, it is astounding!" said M. de Nemours; "but whether through contempt of greatness, or—as is much more probable—for some mysterious reason, such as a secret love affair, or engagements entered into with another, Emmanuel Philibert has received the overtures made to him with more sadness than joy."

"Perhaps also," said Duc François, bitterly, "he has been badly rewarded by royal gratitude? There would be nothing astonishing in that; he, too, ranks among the conquerors."

"In that case," said Nemours, "he would be hard to please, for his dominions are restored to him almost intact, save five cities, and these cities will also be restored to him when he has a male child by his wife."

"And the wife—who is to be the wife?" asked the Cardinal de Lorraine, quickly.

"Ah!" replied Nemours, "then you have not yet heard the news. His wife will be Madame Marguerite of France."

"The king's sister!" cried Catherine.

"She will have reached her ambition," said Duc François; "she would marry none but a sovereign prince."

"Only," said Catherine, with that acidity peculiar to women when talking of one another, "only, she has had to wait a long time, poor thing! for, if I am not mistaken, she is now thirty-six years old; but, in fine, she has not, in all probability, lost much by waiting. And how did Emmanuel Philibert take the news of this royal alliance?"

"Very coldly at first. Comte Maraviglia declares there was a moment when the duke was going to refuse; but after

a quarter of an hour's reflection he accepted. But, when he saw the ambassador again in the evening, he desired not to be considered positively engaged with respect to the marriage before he had seen Princess Marguerite. You understand, however, that the ambassador was careful not to make this hesitation public, and has represented Emmanuel Philibert, on the contrary, to King Henri as the most delighted and grateful of princes."

"And," asked Duc François, "what are the provinces to be surrendered?"

"All," replied the young man, "with the exception of the cities of Turin, Pignerol, Chieri, Chivas, and Villeneuve d'Asti, which will be restored to his first heir male. Besides, it would be shabby in the King of France to bargain over a few towns and castles, since he is surrendering a hundred and ninety-eight to the Queen of England and King of Spain."

"Good!" said the Duc de Guise, turning pale in spite of himself; "and perchance you have heard that Calais was among the number of these towns and castles surrendered by the king?"

"I know nothing about that," replied Nemours.

"*Mordieu!*" said Duc François, "to do so would be to tell me that my sword is useless; I would go and offer it to some sovereign who would utilize it better—did I not," he added, between his teeth, "intend to keep it for myself."

At this moment a servant of the cardinal, who had been placed on guard by his Eminence, hastily raised the tapestry and cried—

"The king!"

"Where?" asked Catherine.

"At the end of the grand gallery," replied the servant.

Catherine looked at Duc François, as if to question him as to what had better be done.

"I shall wait for him," he said.

"Wait for him, monseigneur," said M. de Nemours;

"you are a taker of cities and a winner of battles, and you may wait for all the kings in the world with a bearing loftier than theirs. But do you not believe that when his Majesty meets here the Cardinal de Lorraine and the Duc de Guise he may find that quite enough without me?"

"Yes," said Catherine, "there is no use in his finding you here.—The key, my dear cardinal."

Charles de Lorraine, who held the key in his hand, ready for use at any moment, gave it hastily to the queen. The door opened before the Duc de Nemours, and was just shut discreetly on the news-teller, when Henri de Valois, with gloomy face and wrinkled forehead, appeared at the threshold of the opposite door.

IV

IN THE APARTMENTS OF THE FAVORITE

IF WE have followed the Duc de Guise first, instead of the constable, it was not because what was to pass in the apartments of Madame de Valentinois would be less interesting than what we have seen pass in the apartments of Catherine de Médicis; but it was because François de Guise was a greater personage than M. de Montmorency, as, indeed, we have said, and because Catherine de Médicis was a greater lady than Madame de Valentinois.—Honor to whom honor is due.

But now that we have shown our deference for the royal supremacy, let us see what took place in the apartment of the fair Diane, and try to find out why King Henri presented himself before his wife with gloomy face and wrinkled forehead.

The arrival of the constable was no more a mystery for the Duchesse de Valentinois than the return of the Duc de Guise was a secret for Queen Catherine de Médicis. Each was staking her cards on the table, Catherine crying, "Guise!" and Diane, "Montmorency!"

Just as there were scandalous stories told of the queen and the cardinal, so wicked tongues wagged, as we have said already, on the subject of the relations between the favorite and the constable. Now, how did it happen that an old man of sixty-eight, peevish, crotchety, and brutal, became the rival of a king full of grace and gallantry, twenty-eight years younger? It is a mystery the solution of which we leave to those skilful anatomists who claim that no fibre of the heart can escape their investigation.

But what was real, incontestable, and visible to all eyes, was the almost passive obedience of the fair Diane—that favorite who was more of a queen than the true queen, not only to the wishes, but even to the whims of the constable.

It is true this had lasted for twenty years; that is to say, from the time when Diane was thirty and the constable forty-eight.

It was, therefore, with an exclamation of joy that she heard announced—

"Monseigneur le Connétable de Montmorency."

She was not, however, alone; in a corner of the apartment, half reclining on a pile of cushions, two fair children were tasting the joys of life, into which they had entered through the gate of love: they were the young Queen Mary Stuart and the little Dauphin François, married now for the last six months, and more in love, perhaps, than on the eve of their marriage.

The young sovereign was trying to fix on the head of her husband a velvet cap, which was a little too large for it, but which she was insisting was the right size.

They were so deeply engrossed in this grave occupation that, important as was, politically speaking, the announcement of the return of the illustrious prisoner to Paris, they did not hear it, or, if they did hear it, they did not pay the least attention to it.

Love is such a beautiful thing at fifteen and seventeen that a year of love then is worth twenty years of existence! Was not François II., dying at the age of nineteen, after two years of happiness with the young and beautiful Mary, more fortunate than the latter, who lived thirty years longer than he, but spent three of those thirty years in flight and eighteen in prison?

But Diane, without paying any attention to the two charming beings who were living their exceptional and favored life in a corner of the apartment, went with open arms toward the constable, and offered him her forehead to kiss.

More prudent than she, he stopped as he was about to press his lips on it, and exclaimed—

"Ha! we are not alone, it seems, my fair duchess."

"You are right, my dear constable," she replied.

"Of course I am! I may be old, but my eyes are still good enough to see something stirring yonder."

Diane burst out laughing. "The something stirring yonder," said she, "is the Queen of England and Scotland and the heir to the crown of France. But don't be alarmed; they are too busy with their own affairs to concern themselves about ours."

"Hum!" said the constable, "are matters going on so badly on the other side of the Channel that even these young brains are troubled about them?"

"My dear constable, the Scotch might be at London, or the English at Edinburgh—which would be, in either case, great news—yet, though this news were cried as loudly as that of your return, I question if either of these two children would turn their heads to hear it. Oh, no, they are absorbed by things much more important: they are in love, my dear constable. What is the kingdom of England and Scotland to them, in comparison with that word *love*, which gives the kingdom of heaven to those who pronounce it between two kisses?"

"Ah, siren that you are!" murmured the old constable. "But, come now, how are our affairs getting on?"

"Why, now that you are here," said Diane, "I think they are likely to get on marvellously well. The peace is concluded, or very nearly so; M. de Guise is about to be forced to sheathe his sword; as there is no need of a lieutenant-general, but as there is always need of a constable, my own dear constable will soon have his head above water, and take first place in the kingdom, instead of the second."

"The game has not been badly played, *tête Dieu!*" said the constable. "Remains the question of ransom. You know, my fair Diane, that I have been released on parole, but that I owe two hundred thousand crowns."

"Well, then?" asked the duchess, with a smile.

"Well, then, *mille diables!* I count on not having to pay this ransom."

"For whom were you fighting, my dear constable, when you were taken?"

"*Pardieu!* it was for the king, I should think, though the wound I received was, beyond any doubt, for myself."

"Well, then, the king shall pay it; but I thought I heard it said, my dear constable, that if I brought the negotiations for peace to a successful end, Duke Emmanuel, who is a generous prince, would probably make you a present of these two hundred thousand crowns."

"Did I say so?" asked the constable.

"You did not say so to me: you wrote it."

"The devil!" said the constable, laughing; "it will, then, be necessary to make you a partner in the speculation. Well, look here; we are going to play fair and open. Yes, the Duke of Savoy did release me from the obligation of paying these two hundred thousand crowns; but as my fine nephew, the admiral, is too proud a fellow to accept such a release, I shall not say a single word to him about it."

"Good! so that he will hand you over his one hundred thousand crowns, just as if you had to pay them to Emmanuel Philibert?"

"Perfectly correct."

"And that makes three hundred thousand free of all liabilities?"

"Yes, decidedly! they owe the pleasure of being in my hands to the fair Duchesse de Valentinois. But, as the laborer deserves his hire, this is what we are going to do with these three hundred thousand crowns—"

"In the first place," interrupted the duchess, "we must apply two hundred thousand to indemnify our dear constable for the expenses of his campaign, and for the loss and prejudice his eighteen months' imprisonment have caused him."

"Do you think it too much?"

"Our dear constable is a lion, and it is just that he should have the lion's share.—And the remaining hundred thousand?"

"Will be divided thus: half—that is to say, fifty thousand—will buy trinkets and knickknacks for the adornment of my fair duchess; and fifty thousand will endow our poor children, who are sure, besides, to be in a very wretched condition if the king does not add something to the portion an unhappy father can give his son only by bleeding himself to death!"

"It is true our daughter Diane has already her dowry as Duchesse de Castro, and this dowry is a hundred thousand crowns. But know right well, my dear constable, that if the king, in his munificence, chooses to think that it is not enough for the wife of a Montmorency and the daughter of a king, it is not I who, when he loosens his purse-strings, shall attempt to tighten them."

The constable regarded the favorite with a sort of admiration.

"Good!" said he; "does our king still wear the magic ring you placed on his finger?"

"Always," answered the duchess, smiling; "and as I fancy I hear his Majesty's steps, you are going to have the proof of it."

"Ah, ah!" said the constable, "he always comes, then, by this corridor, and always has the key of this door?"

And, in fact, the king had the key of the secret door of Diane, just as the cardinal had the key of the secret door of Catherine.

There were many secret doors in the Louvre, and all had one key, when they had not two.

"Good!" said the duchess, regarding her venerable adorer with an ineffable smile of mockery; "are you going to be jealous of the king now?"

"I ought, perhaps," grumbled the old soldier.

"Ah, take care!" said the duchess, not able to resist the

temptation of alluding to the proverbial avarice of Montmorency; "it would be a sort of jealousy that would entail a loss to you of two hundred per cent, and it is not your habit to place so high a figure on—" She was about to say, "Your love," but she checked herself just as the words were on the tip of her tongue.

"On what?" asked the constable.

"On your money," said the duchess.

At this moment the king entered.

"Oh, sire," cried Diane, rushing toward him, "you have come, then! It is well, for I was on the point of sending for you. Our dear constable has arrived, as you see, as young and as proud as Mars still."

"Yes," said the king, employing the mythological language of the time, "and his first visit has been to Venus; I do not say: 'To every lord his due honor; but to all beauty its due royalty.'—Your hand, my dear constable."

"*Mordieu!* sire," said Montmorency, crossly, and with a scowl on his face, "I do not know whether I ought to give you my hand."

"Indeed! and why so?" asked the king, smiling.

"Well," answered the constable, scowling more and more, "it looks as if you had somewhat forgotten me yonder."

"Forgotten you, my dear constable?" cried the king, placed on the defensive, though he had such very good reasons for taking the offensive.

"Oh, I know! M. de Guise has been sounding his trumpet in your ears!"

"Faith!" retorted Henri, who could not refrain from responding by a home thrust to the feint of Montmorency, "you can hardly prevent a conqueror from sounding his trumpet."

"Sire," returned Montmorency, rising like a fighting cock on his spurs, "some defeats are as illustrious as victories!"

"Yes," said the king, "but hardly as profitable, you must admit."

"Hardly as profitable—hardly as profitable," snarled the constable; "very true! But war is a game in which the ablest may lose the stakes: the king, your father, knew something about that!"

Henri blushed slightly.

"And as to the city of Saint-Quentin," continued the constable, "it seems to me that if it has surrendered—"

"In the first place," interrupted Henri, "the city of Saint-Quentin has not surrendered; the city of Saint-Quentin has been taken, and taken after a heroic defence, as you know! The city of Saint-Quentin has saved France, which—"

Henri hesitated.

"Yes, finish; which the battle of Saint-Laurent had destroyed: is not that what you were about to say? That is what you mean, is it not? Yes, yes; get yourself bruised and wounded and imprisoned for the sake of a king, and then see what a sweet compliment the king will pay you in return for all!"

"No, my dear constable," said Henri, whom a look of Diane had reduced to repentance—"no, I do not say so; quite the contrary. I only said that Saint-Quentin has made an admirable defence."

"Ah, indeed! for all that, your Majesty has nicely treated its defender!"

"Coligny? What could I do more, my dear constable, than pay his ransom as well as yours?"

"Let us not talk of that, sire. Just as if I was thinking of the ransom of Coligny! no, I am referring to the imprisonment of Dandelot."

"Ah! excuse me, my dear constable," returned the king; "but M. Dandelot is a heretic!"

"As if we were not all affected in that way, more or less. Perhaps, sire, you presume to think you may go to Paradise yourself?"

"Why not?"

"Stuff! you will go there in the same fashion as old

Marshal Strozzi, who died a renegade. Ask your friend M. de Vieilleville what were his last words."

"What were they?"

"They were, 'I deny God; my holiday is over!' And when M. de Guise replied, 'Take care, marshal! you are about to appear in the presence of Him whom you deny!'—'All right!' answered the dying man, snapping his fingers; 'I shall be to-day where all who have died for the last six thousand years are!'—Well, sire, why do you not have his body disinterred and burned on the Gréve? You have a stronger reason for doing so than in ordinary cases. This man died for you; the others have only been wounded."

"Constable," said the king, "you are unjust!"

"Unjust? Pshaw! where is M. Dandelot, then? Inspecting the cavalry, as his duty enjoins, or resting in his chateau after that famous siege of Saint-Quentin, during which, as you acknowledge yourself, he has wrought miracles? No! he is in prison in the chateau of Melun; and why? Because he has told you frankly his opinion about the Mass! Oh, *mordieu!* sire, I don't know what keeps me from turning Huguenot and offering my sword to M. de Condé!"

"Constable!"

"And when I think that my poor dear Dandelot probably owes his imprisonment to M. de Guise—"

"Constable, I swear to you that neither of the Guises had anything at all to do with the matter."

"What! you mean to tell me that this is not a plot of your damned cardinal?"

"Constable, you desire one thing, do you not?" said the king, eluding the question.

"What?"

"It is the release of M. Dandelot, is it not, in honor of your return, and to show how much we rejoice at having you here again?"

"*Mille diables!*" cried the constable, "I should think I desire it! It is not only my desire; it is my will!"

"My cousin," objected the king, with a smile, "you know the king himself says, 'It is our will!' "

"Well, then, sire," said Diane, "say: 'It is our will that our good servant Dandelot be set at liberty, in order that he may be present at the marriage of our well-beloved daughter Diane de Castro to François de Montmorency, Comte de Damville.' "

"Yes," said the constable, still grumbling; "if, nevertheless, this marriage takes place—"

"And why should it not take place?" asked Diane. "Do you consider the couple too poor to set up housekeeping?"

"Oh! if it is only that," said the king, always enchanted at getting out of a difficulty by the expenditure of money, "we'll find a hundred thousand crowns for them somewhere in the treasury chest of our domains."

"That is not the question, by any manner of means!" said the constable. "*Mille diables!* who is talking here of money? I have my doubts about the marriage for quite a different reason."

"And for what, pray?" asked the king.

"Well, because the marriage is disagreeable to your good friends, the Guises."

"In truth, constable, you are fighting against phantoms."

"Against phantoms! And what reason brings Duc François de Guise to Paris except to oppose a marriage that may add new lustre to my house—although, for that matter," added Montmorency, insolently, "Madame de Castro is but a bastard."

The king bit his lips; Diane blushed; but Henri, not wishing to appear to notice the last phrase, said—

"In the first place, my dear constable, you are mistaken: M. de Guise is not in Paris."

"Where is he, then?"

"In the camp at Compiègne."

"And you mean to tell me you have not given him leave of absence?"

"Leave of absence for what?"

"To come to Paris!"

"I have not given M. de Guise any leave."

"Then, sire, M. de Guise has come to Paris without leave, that's all."

"You are mad, constable! M. de Guise knows too well what he owes to me to quit the camp without my permission."

"The fact is, sire, that the duke owes you much—owes you a very great deal, indeed; but he has forgotten what he owed you."

"But are you quite sure, constable," said Diane, also launching her dart, "that M. de Guise has committed—I don't quite know how to term it—what name is given to a breach of discipline?—has committed this impropriety?"

"Excuse me," said Montmorency; "I saw him."

"When?" asked the king.

"A few moments ago."

"Where?"

"At the gates of the Louvre. It was there we met."

"And pray how is it I have not seen him?"

"Because, instead of turning to the right, he went to the left, and instead of visiting the apartments of the king he visited those of the queen."

"You say M. de Guise is with the queen."

"Oh, don't let your Majesty be alarmed," said the constable; "I am willing to wager that he is not the only one with her, and that M. le Cardinal is a good third."

"Ah!" cried the king, "that is what we are about to see. Wait for me here, constable; I shall not be gone a moment."

The king left, furious, while Montmorency and Diane exchanged a look of vengeance, and Mary and François, who had heard nothing, a kiss of love.

Now this was why Henri II. had appeared on the threshhold of Queen Catherine's apartment with gloomy face and wrinkled forehead.

V

IN WHICH AFTER THE VANQUISHED HAS BEEN TREATED LIKE THE VICTOR, THE VICTOR IS TREATED LIKE THE VANQUISHED

THE attitude of our three characters was entirely different, and gave a correct idea of the state of their minds.

Queen Catherine was near the private door, with her back against the tapestry, and her hand, which held the key, behind her; her face was somewhat pale; a thrill ran through her whole body, for ambition has its mysterious emotions that resemble those of love.

The cardinal, dressed in a costume half military, half ecclesiastical, was near a table covered with papers and trinkets; his closed hand rested firmly on the table, and served him as a support.

Duc François stood far away from both, facing the door; he looked like a champion holding the lists against all comers and ready to meet all blows. His costume was almost military—the only parts of his armor wanting were the helmet and cuirass; with his long boots all covered with mud, with his great sword clinging to his side, like some inflexible and faithful friend, he had that aspect he knew so well how to assume on the field of battle when waves of enemies broke against the breast of his horse, as the tumultuous waves of ocean break against some sharp-pointed rock. Having uncovered in presence of the royal majesty, he held in his hand his felt hat shaded by a cherry-colored plume; but his lofty figure, straight and rigid as that of an oak,

did not vary a particle from its upright posture before the king.

Henri was about to come in collision with that commanding dignity of demeanor which made a certain great lady of the period say that, when in presence of the Duc de Guise, all other gentlemen became common.

He stopped, as the pebble that strikes the wall stops, as the lead that strikes the iron.

"Ah! it is you, my cousin," said he. "I am astonished to find you here; I believed you were in command of the camp at Compiègne."

"Exactly like myself, sire," he answered: "no one could have been more surprised than I was to meet M. de Montmorency at the gates of the Louvre; I believed him a prisoner in Antwerp."

Henri bit his lips at this stern reply.

"It is true he is returned, monsieur," said he; "but I have paid his ransom, and for two hundred thousand crowns I have had the pleasure of seeing an old servant and a faithful friend again."

"Does your Majesty estimate at the value of only two hundred thousand crowns the cities you are surrendering, as I am assured, to England, Spain, and Piedmont? As you are surrendering very nearly two hundred, that would make only a thousand crowns a city."

"I restore those cities, monsieur, not to ransom M. de Montmorency, but to purchase peace."

"I had believed until now that—in France, at least—peace was purchased by victories."

"It is because, being a Lorraine prince, monsieur, you know the history of France badly. Have you forgotten, among others, the treaties of Brétigny and Madrid?"

"No, sire; but I did not believe there was identity or even resemblance between the situations. After the battle of Poitiers, King John was a prisoner in London; after the battle of Pavia, King François I. was a prisoner in Toledo. To-day, King Henri II., at the head of a magnificent army,

is the all-powerful tenant of the Louvre. Why, then, renew, in full prosperity, the disasters of the fatal epochs of France?"

"M. de Guise," said the king, haughtily, "have you calculated the rights I gave you when I named you Lieutenant-General of the realm?"

"Yes, sire. After the disastrous battle of Saint-Laurent, after the heroic defence of Saint-Quentin, when the enemy was at Noyon; when M. de Nevers had only two or three hundred gentlemen around him; when affrighted Paris was flying through her broken barriers; when the king, from the highest tower of the chateau of Compiègne, was examining the Picardy road, determined to be the last to retire before the enemy—not like a king who must not expose himself to danger, but like a general, a captain, a soldier who guards a retreat—you called me, sire, and named me Lieutenant of your realm. My right from that moment was to save France, which M. de Montmorency had ruined. What have I done, sire? I have brought back to France the Army of Italy; I have delivered Bourg; I have torn the keys of your kingdom from the girdle of Queen Mary Tudor by recovering Calais; I have regained Guines, Ham, and Thionville; I have surprised Arlon, repaired the disasters of Gravelines, and, after a furious war, have collected in the camp of Compiègne an army twice as numerous as it was at the time I took command. Was that one of my rights, sire?"

"Undoubtedly, undoubtedly," stammered Henri, embarrassed.

"Then your Majesty must permit me to say that I do not at all understand the question you have just addressed to me, 'Have you calculated the rights I gave you when I named you Lieutenant-General of the realm?'"

"I meant, M. le Duc, that among the rights which a king gives to one of his subjects, the right of remonstrance is rarely comprised."

"In the first place," replied Duc François, with an in-

clination so slight and an affectation of courtesy so careless that it became impertinent, "I would take the liberty of drawing your Majesty's attention to the fact that I have not precisely the honor of being your subject; after the death of Duke Albert, the Emperor Henri III. gave the duchy of Upper Lorraine to Gerald of Alsace, first hereditary duke and founder of our house. I received this duchy from my father, and he from his. By the grace of God, what I received from my father I shall leave to my son. If great things may be compared with small, it is what you do, sire, with the kingdom of France."

"Do you know, cousin," said Henri, wishing to give the conversation an ironical turn, "that what you have said inspires me with a certain fear?"

"Fear of what, sire?" asked the duke.

"Fear that France may one day have a war with Lorraine."

The duke bit his lips.

"Sire," he replied, "the fear is more than improbable; but if such a thing should happen, and, as a sovereign prince, I was forced to defend my patrimony against your Majesty, I swear to you it would be only on the breach of my last fortress that I should sign a treaty as disastrous as that to which you have consented."

"M. le Duc!" exclaimed Henri, throwing back his head and raising his voice.

"Sire," replied M. de Guise, "let me tell you what I think and what all of us think who belong to the *noblesse.* The authority of a constable is such, it is claimed, that in a case of extreme necessity he may pledge a third of the kingdom. Well, without other necessity than that of leaving a prison of which he is tired, M. le Connétable costs you more than a third of your realm, sire. Yes, of your realm—for I consider as of your realm all that conquered land of Piedmont which has cost the crown of France more than forty millions of gold, and the soil of France more than a hundred thousand of its children; for I consider

of your realm those fine parliaments of Turin and Chambéry which, as well as many others, the late king, your lord and father, instituted there after the French manner; for I consider as of your realm all those fair Transalpine cities in which so many of your subjects had established their households and taken such root that gradually the inhabitants were abandoning their corrupted Italian, and speaking as good French as is spoken in Lyons or Tours."

"Well," asked Henri, embarrassed at having to answer such arguments, "for whom do I abandon all this? For my father's daughter, for my sister Marguerite."

"No, sire; you abandon it for Duke Emmanuel Philibert, her husband, your most cruel enemy, your most inveterate antagonist. Once married, the Princess Marguerite is no longer the daughter of the king your father; the Princess Marguerite is no longer your sister; the Princess Marguerite is Duchess of Savoy. Now, do you wish me to tell you what will happen, sire? This is what will happen: the Duke of Savoy will no sooner be restored to his dominions than he will tear up all your father has planted there; and this he will do so effectively that all the glory acquired by France in Italy during the last twenty-six or thirty years will be completely extinguished, and you may abandon forever the hope of conquering the duchy of Milan. And yet it is not that which disturbs my mind and afflicts my soul most; it is the fact that you offer such advantages to the lieutenant-general of King Philip, to the representative of that Spanish house which is our most fatal enemy. Just think of it, sire! by means of the Alps, all the passes of which Emmanuel Philibert holds, Spain is at the gates of Lyons!—Lyons, which, before this peace, was in the centre of your kingdom, and which to-day is a frontier city."

"Oh, with regard to that matter," replied Henri, "you have no reason at all to be disturbed, cousin. Duke Emmanuel Philibert, in virtue of an arrangement made between us, passes from the Spanish service into ours. Should M.

le Connétable die, his sword is promised to the Duke of Savoy."

"And doubtless that is why," replied François de Guise, bitterly, "Duke Emmanuel Philibert took it from him in advance at Saint-Quentin?"

Then as the king made an impatient gesture—

"Pardon me, sire," continued the duke; "I am wrong, and such questions ought to be treated more seriously. So Duke Emmanuel Philibert is to succeed M. de Montmorency? So M. de Savoie is to hold in his hands the *fleur-de-lis* sword? Well, sire, take care that on the day you place that sword in his possession he does not use it as the Count of Saint-Paul did, who, like the Duke of Savoy, was also a foreigner, being of the House of Luxembourg. King Louis XI. and the Duke of Burgundy also made a peace one fine day, as you wish to do, or have already done, with the King of Spain; one of the conditions of this peace was that the Count of Saint-Paul should be Constable of France, and he was; but he was hardly constable when he began to treacherously support the Duke of Burgundy, his first master, and marched on from treason to treason, as may be read in the 'Memoirs of Philippe de Comines.'"

"Good!" replied Henri; "since you refer me to the 'Memoirs of Philippe de Comines,' I am willing to base my answer on these Memoirs. What was the result of all the treasons of Saint-Paul? that he lost his head, was it not? Well, listen to this, cousin, on the first treason of Duke Emmanuel, I swear to you—and you hear this from my own lips—that he shall be dealt with exactly as was the Constable of Saint-Paul by my predecessor Louis XI. But, thank God! no such necessity will arise," continued the king. "Duke Emmanuel Philibert, far from forgetting what he owes us, will always have before his eyes the position we have made for him. Besides, we retain the marquisate of Saluces in the midst of his territories, as a mark of honor for the crown of France, and in order that the Duke of Savoy, his children and his posterity, may never forget

that our kings formerly conquered and possessed all Piedmont and Savoy, but that, in favor of a daughter of France who married into their house, all these conquests and possessions on both sides of the mountains were restored, or rather made over as a gift, to the said house, to render it, by this boundless liberality, more obedient and devoted to the crown of France."

Then as the king saw that M. de Guise did not seem to set a very high value on this marquisate of Saluces reserved to the crown of France, he added:

"Moreover, if you will have the goodness to reflect on the matter, you must see as well as I that the seizure of the territories of the poor prince who was father of the present Duke of Savoy was a very tyrannical usurpation on the part of the late king, my lord and father; for he really had not any right at all on his side, and to banish a son in this way from the duchy of his father, and strip him of everything, was surely not acting as a good Christian; and though I had no other motive than that of relieving the soul of the king my father from such a sin, I would restore to Emmanuel Philibert what belongs to him."

The duke bowed.

"Well," asked Henri, "you do not answer, M. de Guise?"

"Yes, sire. But since the excitement of your Majesty has led you to accuse even the king your father of tyranny, it is no longer—I who esteem King François I. a great king and not a tyrant—it is no longer to King Henri II., it is to King François I. that I have to render an account of my conduct. Just as you have judged your father, sire, your father shall judge me; and as I believe the judgment of the dead more infallible than the judgment of the living, being condemned by the living, I appeal to the dead."

Thereupon, approaching that fine portrait of François I. by Titian which is to-day one of the glories of the Museum of the Louvre, but which then was the chief ornament of the room in which this discussion took place, and which

we have just related, with the object of proving to our readers that it was not the edge of the sword, but the fascinating graces of a woman which led to the signing of the fatal treaty of Chateau-Cambrésis—

"O King François!" said the duke, "you who were armed by Bayard, and called the Knightly King—a title that contained all the glorious characteristics of the kings your predecessors—you loved sieges and battles too much during your life, and were too much attached to your fair realm of France not to view from on high what is passing among us! You know what I have done and what I wished to do still; but I am arrested in my career, O my king! and they prefer a peace, the signing of which costs us more than would thirty years of reverses! The sword of a lieutenant-general of the kingdom is, then, useless; and as I do not wish it to be said that such a peace was consented to as long as the Duc de Guise had his sword by his side, I, François de Lorraine, who never yet surrendered his sword, surrender it now to you, my king, the first for whom I drew it, and who knows its value!"

At these words, the duke loosened the sword from his belt, hung it up as a trophy on the frame of the picture, bowed and went from the room, leaving the King of France furious, the cardinal utterly depressed, and Catherine triumphant.

In fact, the vindictive Florentine saw but one thing in all this; it was the insult offered by François de Guise to Madame de Valentinois, her rival, and to the constable, her enemy.

VI

THE PEDLER

BETWEEN these two ambitious groups, making the dignity of the king or the greatness of France the pretext of their mutual hostility, but really only caring for the success of their own houses and devoting all their energies to the destruction of the houses of their rivals, rose a third group altogether poetic, artistic and devoted to the true, the beautiful, and the good; this group was composed of the young Princess Elisabeth, daughter of Henri II., Diane d'Angouleme, Duchesse de Castro, widow of Horace Farnese, the young husband and wife we lately saw in the apartment of Madame de Valentinois, and finally, Madame Marguerite of France, daughter of François I. just affianced to Emmanuel Philibert by the peace; her gracious and serene figure was the principal feature in the scene.

Around these charming faces, like butterflies around a bed of flowers, flitted all the poets of the time: Ronsard, Du Bellay, Godelle, Daurat, and Remy Belleau, as well as a few men graver than they, but not less lettered, such as good old Amyot, translator of Plutarch and preceptor to Prince Charles, and Chancellor de l'Hopital, private secretary of Madame Marguerite.

These were the favored friends of those royal dames; they had what was afterward called, under Louis XIV., "the great and little entries." At any hour of the day they might call on Madame Marguerite, their protectress; but their reception was of a more marked and intimate

character between one and two in the afternoon, after dinner.

The news of peace, which was becoming more and more positive—indeed, it was announced that its preliminaries were already signed—had, in its flight, dropped from its great white wings tears for some of those whom we have just presented to our readers, and smiles for others.

It may be easily guessed that Mary Stuart and François II. had little to do with this distribution of sadness and joy; destiny had already allotted to them their portion, and we have seen that neither complained of it.

Nor did the beautiful widow of Alexander Farnese complain either; she was marrying a fine and noble gentleman a little over thirty, rich and the bearer of a great name. The only mystery, therefore, that lay in the future was how far harmony of tastes or opposition of character might affect the happiness of herself and her husband.

Princess Marguerite was, however, the one on whom that fair goddess whom men call Peace had bestowed the choicest of her gifts. We know that, ever since her visit to Nice, the memory of a young prince, twelve or fourteen years old, had dwelt in her heart; and now after sixteen years of disenchantment, of obstacles and even impossibilities, the dream of her heart had suddenly become a reality, the phantom had taken form, and hope was transformed into certain happiness.

One of the conditions of this peace, now on the brink of being signed, if not signed already, was her marriage with that little prince of Savoy, who, under the name of Emmanuel Philibert, had become one of the first captains of his age. And so, we repeat, Madame Marguerite was very happy.

Alas! this was not the case with poor Elisabeth! Betrothed at first to the young prince Don Carlos, who had sent her his portrait and received hers in return, the unexpected death of Mary Tudor suddenly prostrated the scaffolding of her happiness, which she had believed beyond

the reach of peril. Philip, having been rejected by Elizabeth of England, to whom he proposed after the decease of Mary, had cast his eyes on Elisabeth of France, and in the conditions of the treaty of peace, two words only had to be changed, which two words were to result in the unhappiness of two persons, and even of three.

Instead of the words, "*Prince Carlos* will marry the Princess Elisabeth of France," were written these others, "*King Philip* will marry the Princess Elisabeth of France."

Now, it is easy to understand what a terrible blow these two words inflicted on the heart of the poor princess, who, without being consulted on the matter, was thus compelled to change her betrothed. At fifteen, instead of marrying a handsome, chivalrous and amorous prince of sixteen, she was forced to marry a king, young still, but old before his time, gloomy, distrustful and fanatic, who would hem her round with the laws of Spanish etiquette, the most severe of all laws of etiquette, and who, instead of tournaments, festivals, and spectacles, would amuse her from time to time with the horrible exhibition of an *auto-da-fé*.

The different personages we have enumerated had, according to their custom, met after dinner, that is to say, between one and two, in the apartment of Madame Marguerite, each musing on her own joys or sorrows—Madame Marguerite near a half-open window, through which glided a pale sunbeam that seemed to be warming itself in the gold of her hair; Elisabeth kneeling at her feet, with her head on her knees; Diane de Castro, in a big armchair, reading the poems of Maitre Ronsard; and Mary Stuart playing, on the spinet, that venerable grandmother of the clavichord and ancestress of the piano, an Italian melody to which she had adapted words of her own composition.

Suddenly Madame Marguerite, whose blue eyes were apparently searching for a patch of azure in the skies that would remind them of their native country, started out of the vague revery into which she had fallen, and, deigning

to lower to earth her goddess-like gaze, seemed to be lending some attention to a scene that was passing in a court connected by a wicket, or rather postern, with that tongue of land which then sloped down to the Seine, and which we at present call improperly the quay, not knowing what other name to give it.

"What is the matter?" asked Madame Marguerite, in that charming voice which all the poets of the time have sung, and which took even softer tones when she spoke to her inferiors than when she spoke to her equals.

Another voice answered from below, as she leaned out of the window; but it did not reach the ears of the four others, each absorbed in their different thoughts, who were in the interior of the apartment.

However, while playing the last note of the melody she had just been singing, Mary Stuart turned toward Marguerite, as if to ask the meaning of this vertical dialogue, of which she had heard only the few words uttered by the princess.

"My dear little queen," said Marguerite, answering this mute inquiry, "you must request my well-beloved nephew the dauphin to pardon the great impropriety I have just been guilty of."

"Oh, fair aunt!" said François before Mary Stuart could utter a word, "we know your improprieties always turn out charming fancies. So you are pardoned beforehand, supposing we have the right of reprimand or pardon."

"Pray, what have you done, madame?" inquired Diane de Castro, raising her eyes from her book with a languor that showed her memories and hopes had but little connection with what she was reading.

"I have authorized two Italian pedlers, who were unwilling, they said, to unpack their treasures except in our presence, to be introduced. One, it appears, sells jewels, and the other stuffs."

"Oh," cried Mary, clapping her hands like a child, "how well you have acted, dear aunt! The jewels that

come from Florence and the stuffs from Venice are so beautiful!"

"What if we were to bring Madame de Valentinois here?" said Diane de Castro, going to the door.

Princess Marguerite stopped her.

"Would it not be better, my fair Diane," said she, "to give a surprise to our dear duchess? Let us first select two or three objects and send them to her as a present—that is, supposing these merchants to be as well supplied as they claim to be—then we shall send her the merchants themselves."

"You are always right, madame," replied Diane, kissing the hand of the princess.

The latter turned to Elisabeth.

"And you, my dear child, can you not call up one little smile?"

"Why should I smile?" asked the young princess, showing her eyes bathed in tears.

"Just for the sake of those who love you, my child."

"I can smile when I think I am among those who love me; but I weep when I think how soon I must leave them."

"Nonsense, a little courage, sister!" said François. "What the mischief! King Philip is perhaps not as terrible as they say; then you have taken it into your head that he is an old man. He is nothing of the sort; he is just the same age as François de Montmorency, thirty-two—and our sister Diane is far from complaining of the husband they are giving her, very far indeed."

Elisabeth sighed.

"I would make no complaint," she said, "if I had to marry one of the pedlers who are about to enter, but I do complain of having to marry King Philip."

"Oh!" said little Queen Mary, "the beautiful stuffs they are going to show us will delight your eyes; but, my darling sister, you must dry your tears or you cannot see them."

Then, approaching Elisabeth with her handkerchief, she first wiped her eyes, and then, hastily kissing her, exclaimed—

"Ah! I hear the merchants."

Elisabeth tried to smile.

"Should you find among their goods a piece of black stuff interwoven with silver threads, you will know beforehand that I want it for my wedding-dress, and will put it aside for me, will you not, my sisters?"

At that moment, the door opened, and two men appeared in the antechamber, dressed like pedlers, and each having on his back one of those immense boxes in which hawkers place their merchandise, and which they call their packs.

"Pardon me, your Highness," said the usher, addressing Princess Marguerite, "but perhaps the servants downstairs have misunderstood you."

"Misunderstood me? How?" asked Marguerite.

"Because they say you have permitted these two men to come upstairs."

"They say the truth," replied Marguerite.

"Then these men may enter?"

"Undoubtedly."

"Enter, good people," said the usher, turning to the two men, "and try to remember where you are!"

"Oh, don't bother yourself, my good man!" returned the pedler who seemed to be the younger of the pair, a handsome blond and red-cheeked youth, with red beard and mustaches, who spoke a Savoyard *patois;* "this isn't the first time we have spoken to princes and princesses."

"Good!" said François; "no need asking where they came from."

Then, in a whisper—

"Aunt Marguerite, they are probably," said he, laughing, "ambassadors in disguise, come from the duke to find out whether he was deceived or not when he was told you were the most charming princess in the world."

"In any case," said Marguerite, "they are my future subjects, and you will not think badly of me for treating them as such."

Upon which she turned toward them, saying—

"Enter, my friends."

"Don't you hear yon lovely lady—God keep her!—inviting you to enter?" said the blond pedler with the red beard; and as if to give a good example to his companion, he entered at once.

Behind him came his comrade.

He was a man of about thirty or thirty-two years, vigorously built, and who had an air of singular distinction, notwithstanding the coarse and dusky appearance of his garments.

On perceiving him, the Princess Marguerite checked a cry that was just escaping from her lips, and her excitement, though momentary, was so apparent the blond pedler saw it.

"Oh, is anything the matter, my beautiful lady?" he asked, laying his pack on the floor. "Did your foot slip? for I was afraid you were going to fall."

"No," said Marguerite, smiling; "but when I saw the difficulty your comrade had in getting rid of his box, I was taking a step forward to aid him."

"That would be fine!" said the same speaker, who appeared to have taken all the burden of the conversation on his own shoulders; "it would be the first time a princess's hand touched a poor pedler's pack. You see the boy has been only a short time at the trade, and he's still very awkward—isn't what I'm saying true, Beppo?"

"Are you an Italian, my friend?" asked Marguerite.

"*Si, signora*," replied the Italian with the black beard.

"And you come—?"

"From Venice by way of Florence, Milan and Turin. And when we reached Paris, we heard there would be grand festivals in the capital on the occasion of the peace and marriage of two illustrious princesses, and so my com-

rade and I said to ourselves that if we could only get near their Royal Highnesses our fortune would be made."

"Ha! you see when he patters the gibberish of his own country, he can jabber almost as fast as myself," said the comrade.

"Indeed," said the brown pedler, "I have been told there are two or three princesses here who speak Italian like their native tongue."

Marguerite smiled; she appeared to take extreme pleasure in the conversation of this man, in whose mouth the Piedmont *patois*—that is to say, the language of the peasants—was impregnated with perfect elegance.

"Yes, my dear little niece Mary," she said, "speaks all languages, and particularly the language of Dante, Ariosto and Tasso. Come here, Mary, and ask this worthy man news of the fair country where, as the poet of the 'Inferno' says, the *si* resounds."

"And can't I," said the blond pedler, "find any lovely princess to speak Savoyard with me?"

"You may find me," said Marguerite.

"You speak Savoyard? No; that cannot be true."

"I do not speak it, but I wish to learn it," said Marguerite.

"Ah, you're right; it is a fine language."

"But," said Queen Mary, in the purest Tuscan ever spoken from Pisa to Arezzo, "you promised us wonders, and, although we are princesses, we are women. Do not make us wait too long."

"Oh!" said François, "it is easy to see you don't know much about these babblers who come from the other side of the Alps. To hear them talk, you would fancy they carried the seven wonders of the world on their back; but when they open their packs, you find nothing in them but rings of rock crystal, filigree diadems, and Roman pearls. You had better make haste, friend; if you don't, you may fare badly, for the longer you make us wait, the harder it will be to please us."

"What is the signor prince saying?" asked the brown pedler, as if he had not understood.

Marguerite translated the words of the young dauphin, softening such of them as might sound a little harsh in the ears of the brown pedler, whom, because he happened to be a Piedmontese, she seemed to have taken under her protection.

"I am waiting," replied the pedler, "until the fair young lady who is in the balcony, and looks so sad, comes here also. I have always known that precious stones possess a powerful magic for drying the tears in beautiful eyes, however bitter those tears may be."

"You are listening, my dear Elisabeth?" said Marguerite. "Come, rise at once, and take example by your sister Diane, who is already gloating over the jewels the box contains, through the lid!"

Elisabeth came carelessly, and rested her pale and languishing head on the shoulder of her brother.

"And now," said François, bantering, "shut your eyes at once, so that they may not be dazzled at what they're going to see."

As if he had only waited for the invitation, the brown pedler opened his box; and, just as the dauphin had said, the women, accustomed though they were to precious stones and rich jewels, started back dazzled, uttering cries of delight and admiration.

VII

WEDDING GOWNS AND JEWELS

IN FACT, it looked as if some one of the genii of the earth had opened before the princesses the entrance to a mine of Golconda or Visapour, so brightly did the four shelves arranged on the sides of the box blaze with the flame of diamonds, the blue, red, and green lightnings of sapphires, rubies, and emeralds, amid which pearls of all sizes and shapes cast the strange sheen of their wan purity.

The princesses looked at one another astounded, asking with their eyes whether they were rich enough to pay for these gems offered them by a simple Italian pedler.

"Well," asked Mary Stuart of the dauphin, "what do you say to that, François?"

"I?" said the young prince, dazzled in his turn. "I say nothing: I admire!"

The pedler with the black beard seemed not to understand him; and, as if he had guessed what had been said at the moment he entered, with respect to the Duchesse de Valentinois, as if he knew all the influence exercised over this princely and royal world by the beautiful Diane de Poitiers—

"Let us begin," said he, "by thinking of the absent; it is a pious act which cannot offend those who are present, and for which those who are away will be grateful."

At these words the pedler plunged his hand in the box of wonders, and drew forth a diadem, which, when exposed to the light of day, forced a cry of astonishment from the spectators.

"This," said he, "is a very simple diadem; but, notwithstanding its simplicity, thanks to the hand of the illustrious jeweller who chiselled it, it does not seem to me unworthy of the person for whom it is intended. It is, as you see, a triple crescent, enlaced as a true lover's knot; in the opening, the shepherd Endymion is lying asleep, and there, in her mother-of-pearl chariot, with diamond wheels, the goddess Diana is coming to visit him in his sleep. Is not one of the illustrious princesses before me named Diane de Castro?"

Diane, forgetting that the speaker was a mere tradesman, advanced with as much eagerness, and, we will say, with as much politeness, as if he were a prince, so much does the sight of a work of art, a precious jewel, anything having a princely value, make a prince of its possessor.

"I am so named, my friend," she said.

"Well, most illustrious princess," replied the pedler, bowing, "this diadem was made by Benvenuto Cellini by the order of Cosmo I. of Florence: it was for sale: I purchased it, hoping to dispose of it advantageously at the court of France, where I knew I should find two Dianes instead of one. Do you not think it would marvellously become the marble brow of Madame de Valentinois?"

Diane de Castro uttered a little cry of delight.

"My mother! my dear mother!" she exclaimed, "how pleased she will be!"

"Diane," said the dauphin, "tell her it is a present from her children, François and Mary."

"Since monseigneur has pronounced these two illustrious names," returned the pedler, "would he deign to allow me to place under his eyes a certain article which, in my desire to be agreeable to those who bear them, I had already intended to submit to their inspection? This, monseigneur, is a reliquary of pure gold, which belonged to Leo X., and, instead of ordinary relics, contains a portion of the true cross. The design was by Michelangelo, and it was executed by Nicolas Braschi of Ferrara. The ruby, which is

enchased above the hollow destined to receive the sacred host, was brought from India by the famous traveller, Marco Polo. This splendid jewel was—you will excuse me, monseigneur—destined, in my own mind, for the young, beautiful, and illustrious Queen Mary Stuart; it will incessantly recall to her, in that land of heretics over which she is one day to rule, that there is no faith but the Catholic faith, and that it is better to die for that faith, like the Man-God, a piece of whose precious cross is inclosed in this reliquary, than to deny it for the sake of wearing the triple crown of Scotland, Ireland, and England."

Mary had already stretched out her hands to receive this magnificent heritage of the papacy, when François, hesitating, stopped her.

"We must take care, Mary!" he said; "this reliquary will cost a king's ransom."

A smile gleamed faintly on the rather mocking lips of the pedler; perhaps he was thinking—"The ransom of a king is not dear, when, like your grandfather, François I., one does not pay it;" but he was careful to refrain from uttering his thought, and said—

"I purchased it on credit, monseigneur; and, as I have full confidence in the buyer, I am willing to sell it on credit also."

And the reliquary passed from the hands of the hawker into those of Mary Stuart, who placed it on a table, and knelt before it, not to say her prayers, but to admire it at her ease.

François, the shadow of this charming body, was hastening to her side, when the pedler called him back, saying—

"Excuse me, monseigneur, but I have something here which may suit you. Do me the favor to cast your eyes on this weapon."

"Oh, what a splendid poniard!" exclaimed François, snatching the dagger from the hands of the pedler, as Achilles did the sword from the hands of Ulysses.

"Is it not, monseigneur, a marvellous piece of work?

It is a poniard intended for Lorenzo de Médicis, a peaceful prince, whom people sometimes wished to kill, but who himself never killed anybody. It was wrought by the goldsmith Ghirlandajo, whose shop is on the Ponte-Vecchio at Florence. It is said this part" (and the pedler pointed to the hilt) "was modelled by Michelangelo when he was fifteen years old. Lorenzo died before the poniard was finished. For sixty-seven years it remained the property of the descendants of Ghirlandajo; they were in want of money at the time I happened to be passing through Florence. I bought this marvel for the price of a bit of bread, and I shall only charge you my travelling expenses in addition, monseigneur. Take it, then, in all confidence; such a trifle will not ruin the Dauphin of France."

The young prince uttered a cry of joy, drew the poniard from the sheath, and, to determine whether the blade was as good as the hilt and scabbard, he laid a piece of gold on the oak table at which Mary was kneeling, and, with one blow, dealt with a force hardly to be expected from so frail a hand, he pierced the piece of gold through.

"Ha!" he exclaimed joyously, pointing to the gold piece, through which the point of the dagger appeared; "could you do as much?"

"Monseigneur," replied the merchant, humbly, "I am a poor pedler, badly trained in the sports of princes and captains: I sell poniards; I do not use them."

"Oh!" said François, "you look to me like a lad that, upon occasion, could play with sword and dagger as well as any one in the world! Try to do, then, as well as I have done, and if, through want of address, you break the blade, the loss will be put down to my account."

The pedler smiled. "If you absolutely insist, monseigneur," said he, "I shall try."

"Good!" said François, searching for a second gold crown in his pocket.

But, during this time, the pedler had drawn, from the little leather purse hanging at his belt, a Spanish quadruple

three times thicker than the rose noble on the table that François had pierced.

Then, without an effort, and as if he had merely raised and dropped his arm, he reproduced the experiment of the young prince, but with a very different result; for, after piercing the gold as if it were paper, the blade went a depth of two inches into the oak table, piercing it through and through, just as the dauphin had the coin.

Moreover, the blow drove it through the exact centre of the quadruple, just as if this centre had been measured by a compass.

The pedler let the young prince draw, as he could, the poniard from the table, and returned to his jewels.

"And have you nothing for me, my friend?" asked the widow of Alexander Farnese.

"Excuse me, madame," replied the pedler; "here is an Arabian bracelet of great richness and surpassing originality: it was taken from the treasury of the harem in Tunis, when Charles V., of glorious memory, entered that city triumphantly, in 1535. I bought it from an old *condottiere* who followed the emperor in that campaign, and put it aside specially for your inspection; if you do not like it, you can choose something else. Thank God! you see we are not yet at the end of our treasures."

And, in fact, the amazed eyes of the young widow were able to see, as in a brilliant abyss, the marvels that still remained at the bottom of the pedler's chest.

But the bracelet, as the merchant had said, was at once too original and too rich not to satisfy the desire of Diane de Castro, however fantastic it might be. The fair widow, therefore, took the bracelet, and appeared only to have one anxiety; namely, as to whether it would be possible to pay for such a magnificent acquisition.

Remained Princess Elisabeth and Princess Marguerite: Princess Elisabeth, who awaited her share in the pedler's wares with the melancholy of indifference, and Princess Marguerite, who awaited hers with the calmness of conviction.

"Madame," said the pedler, to the betrothed of King Philip, "although I have laid something aside to be presented to your Royal Highness, would it please you better to make a selection yourself among these jewels? Your heart appears to care so little for all these trifles that I fear I may not have chosen according to your taste, and I should prefer if you would choose for yourself."

Elisabeth seemed to awaken from a deep revery.

"What?" she said—"what do you ask of me? What do you desire?"

Thereupon, Marguerite, taking from the hands of the pedler a magnificent necklace of pearls, fastened by a single diamond as big as a nut, and worth a million francs, said to her—

"My dear little niece, we are desirous for you to try this necklace, in order to get an idea how it becomes your neck, or rather how your neck becomes it."

And she fastened the necklace round the neck of Elisabeth, pushing her in front of a small Venetian mirror, so that she might be able to judge herself of the lustre which the pearls cast on her neck, or of the wrong which her neck did to the pearls.

But she, always absorbed in her grief, passed, unheeding, in front of the mirror, and, without pausing, went and sat down in the place near the window which she occupied when the pedler entered.

Marguerite looked sadly after her, and, on turning round, perceived that the eyes of the pedler took the same direction as hers, and expressed a sadness not less real.

"Alas!" she murmured, "all the pearls of the Orient will never dispel the gloom of that brow!"

Then, coming back to the pedler, and, as it were, lifting the veil of melancholy which covered her face—

"So I," said she, "am, apparently, the only one forgotten?"

"Madame," said the pedler, "chance, or rather my

good fortune, decided that I should meet Prince Emmanuel Philibert on my route. As I am a native of Piedmont, and therefore his subject, I told him the object of my journey, and my ambition to be introduced to your Royal Highness. Then, in the hope that I might reach my aim, he placed in my hands, charging me to lay it at your feet, this girdle offered by his father, Charles III., to his mother, Beatrix of Portugal, on the day of their marriage. It is, as you see, a serpent of gold enamelled in blue; its mouth holds a chatelaine, from which hang five keys of the same metal; these keys are the keys of Turin, Chambéry, Nice, Verceil, and Villeneuve-d'Asti, emblazoned with the arms of these cities, which are the *fleurons* of your crown; each of them opens an *armoire* in the palace of Turin, which you shall yourself open on the day of your entrance into that palace as sovereign Duchess of Piedmont. After this girdle, what could I present to you that would be worthy of your acceptance? Nothing, madame, except, it might be, some rich stuffs which my companion will have the honor of showing you."

Then the second pedler opened his box, and unrolled before the wondering eyes of the princesses a dazzling collection of those magnificent scarfs of Algiers, Tunis, and Smyrna that seem embroidered with the sunbeams of Turkey and Africa; an assortment of those rich stuffs, with brocade flowers of gold and silver, which Paul Veronese throws over the shoulders of his doges and duchesses, and whose sumptuous folds, after lapping their bodies, used to sweep the steps of the palaces and churches behind them; finally, a selection of long pieces of satin which, after travelling from the east to the west, halted at this epoch for a time at Venice, and then were sent forward to dazzle the eyes of the fair dames of Antwerp, Brussels and Ghent. From these three centres, as from a triple caravansary, they set out again, bearing to England, France and Spain a marvellous sample of the patience of Hindu and Chinese, whose needles had traced on each of them, in colors more brilliant

than those of Nature herself, a whole universe of fantastic birds, unknown flowers, and impossible chimeras!

The princesses divided these treasures among them with that feverish briskness which seizes on every woman, whatever be her rank, at sight of those objects of adornment, that must, her love of admiration tells her, enhance the charms she has already received from Nature; and at the end of a quarter of an hour the blond pedler had quite as large an account to be settled for his stuffs as the brown pedler had for his precious stones.

Still, the accounts had yet to be settled. The purchasers had severally their own methods of obtaining a clear receipt from the travelling merchants: Diane de Castro intended to have recourse to her mother, Madame de Valentinois; Mary Stuart to her uncles, the Guises; the dauphin to his father, Henri II.; Madame Marguerite to herself alone. As to Princess Elisabeth, she was almost a stranger to what was passing, and took as little interest in the question of payment as she had done in the purchase.

But at the very moment when the fair buyers were beginning to think of putting their hands into their own purses, or into the purses of others better furnished than theirs, the two merchants declared they could not at present place a value on the stuffs or jewels; they must consult their books, in order to avoid making any mistake.

Consequently, they asked permission of their illustrious customers to return at the same hour next day; this would have the double advantage of giving the sellers time to fix their prices, and the buyers time to procure money.

As soon as this proposal, which suited everybody, was made, the two pedlers hoisted, with considerable awkwardness, their packs on their shoulders, and took leave, the one in Savoyard, the other in Piedmontese, of the august assembly, with much bowing and scraping, and a profusion of thanks.

But while they were making ready for departure, Marguerite had disappeared, and the eyes of the Piedmontese

vainly looked for the princess at the moment when the door of the apartment closed behind him, in which the strange scene we have just related took place.

But when he was in the antechamber, he was accosted by a page, who laid a finger on his shoulder, and made a sign to him to deposit his burden near the bench of carved wood which ran round the room, and to follow him.

The pedler obeyed, placed his pack on the spot indicated, and followed the page along a corridor, on which several doors opened.

At the sound of his steps one of the doors was flung back; he turned his head, and found himself face to face with the Princess Marguerite.

At the same time the page disappeared behind a piece of tapestry.

The pedler was astonished.

"Fair jeweller!" said the princess, with a charming smile, "do not be surprised because I have summoned you to my presence. I did not care to delay, for fear of not seeing you again, the only payment that is worthy of you and me."

And, with that perfect grace that attended all her movements, the princess tendered her hand to the pedler.

The latter, on his side, knelt down on one knee, took the white hand with the tips of his fingers, and, as courteously as any gentleman, pressed his lips on it, with a sigh which the princess attributed to emotion, and which, perhaps, expressed only regret. Then, after a moment's silence:

"Madame," said the pedler, this time in excellent French, "your Highness does me a great honor; but do you know the man to whom this honor is paid?"

"Monseigneur," said Marguerite, "I entered the castle of Nice seventeen years ago, and Duke Charles presented his son to me as my future husband; from that day I have regarded myself as betrothed to Prince Emmanuel Philibert, and, full of confidence in God, I have awaited the hour when it should please Providence to unite us. God has

rewarded the trust I placed in Him by rendering me to-day the happiest and proudest princess on earth!"

Then, judging that she had said enough, the princess, with a double movement, quick as thought, with one hand flung around the neck of Emmanuel Philibert the chain of gold and precious stones she wore around her own, and with the other let fall the hangings which separated her from him with whom she had now exchanged betrothal gifts.

On the next and two following days, the presence of the two pedlers at the Louvre was vainly looked forward to; and, as Princess Marguerite made no one her confidant as to what had taken place after the merchants left the apartment, those nearest the truth thought that the two generous distributers of jewels and robes were two envoys sent by Emmanuel Philibert to offer them these gifts as wedding presents; but no one went so far as to imagine that one of these two pedlers was the prince himself, and the other his faithful and inseparable friend, Scianca-Ferro.

VIII

WHAT PASSED AT THE CHÂTEAU OF LES TOURNELLES AND IN THE STREETS OF PARIS DURING THE FIRST DAYS OF JUNE, 1559

ON THE 5th day of June, 1559, a splendid cavalcade, composed of ten clarions, a king-at-arms, four heralds, a hundred and twenty pages attached to the chamber, equerry, falconry, and other departments, and thirty or forty squires who closed the procession, issued forth from the royal palace of Les Tournelles, situated near the Bastille, followed by a great concourse of people who had never seen such magnificence, and halted on the square of the Hotel de Ville.

There the trumpets sounded thrice, in order to give the windows time to open, and those who were far off to come near; then, when the crowd was very dense, when all eyes were strained and all ears open, the king-at-arms unfolded a great parchment, sealed with the royal seal; and, after the heralds had thrice cried, "Silence! Hear what is about to be said!" the king-at-arms began to read the following cartel:

BY ORDER OF THE KING

Inasmuch as, by a long, violent and cruel war, arms have, in divers places, been employed with effusion of human blood and other pernicious acts customary in war, and inasmuch as God, in His benign grace, clemency, and goodness, has deigned to grant to all Christendom, afflicted with so many misfortunes, the repose of a good and certain peace, it is right fitting that each, with every demonstration of joy, pleasure and gladness, should praise and celebrate

such a great benefit, which has converted all enmities into friendships, and all animosity into goodwill, by means of the close alliances of consanguinity which are made in consequence of the marriages arranged, pursuant to the treaty of the said peace; to wit:

Of the most high, puissant, and magnanimous prince, Philip, Catholic King of the Spains, with the most high and excellent princess, Madame Elisabeth, eldest daughter of the most high, puissant and magnanimous prince, Henri, second of the name, most Christian King of France, our sovereign lord.

And also of the most high and puissant prince, Emmanuel Philibert, Duke of Savoy, with the most high and excellent princess, Madame Marguerite of France, Duchesse de Berry, only sister of the said lord, most Christian king, our sovereign lord;

Who, considering that, thanks to the opportunities offered and presented, arms, when unconnected with cruelty and violence, may and ought to be used by those who desire to test and exercise themselves in virtuous and laudable feats and deeds,

Makes known, therefore, to all princes, lords, gentlemen, knights and squires, familiar with feats of arms, and desiring to engage therein, in order to excite the young to virtuous deeds and exhibit the prowess of those trained in war, that in the capital city of Paris the lists will be opened by his most Christian Majesty and by the princes Alfonzo, Duke of Ferrara, François de Lorraine, Duc de Guise, peer and grand chamberlain of France, and Jacques de Savoie, Duc de Nemours, all Knights of the Order, to be held against all comers duly qualified, beginning the sixteenth day of the present month of June, and continuing until the accomplishment and conclusion of the feats of high emprise and articles hereunto following.

The first emprise will consist of four thrusts of the lance, on horseback, one against one or two against two, according to the will of the masters of the camp.

The third emprise, on foot, of three pike-thrusts and six sword-thrusts.

And if any one strike the horse in the course, instead of striking the rider, he shall be put out of the lists without permission to return, unless the king grants it.

And the four masters of the camp shall have directions for the due ordering thereof.

And the assailant who has done best on horseback shall have the prize, pursuant to the discretion of the said judges.

Equally, he who has done best with pike or sword shall have the prize, pursuant to the discretion of the said judges.

All the assailants, as well those of this realm as foreigners, must touch one of the shields, which will be suspended above the steps at the end of the lists, according to the feats of high emprise they wish to achieve, and so will touch several of them, at choice, or all, if they desire it; and an officer of arms will be stationed there to enroll them according to the shields they may have touched.

The assailants also must bring or have brought by a gentleman, to the said officer of arms, their shields emblazoned with their arms, in order that this shield may be suspended at the entrance for three days before the beginning of the said tourney.

And, in case they do not bring, in the said time, or cause to be brought, their shields, they shall not be received at the said tourney except by permission of the holders.

And, in sign of the truth thereof, we, Henri, by the grace of God King of France, have signed the present writing with our hand. (*Signed*) HENRI.

As soon as the cartel was read, the four heralds cried three times—

"God save King Henri, to whom may the Lord grant long and glorious days!"

Then the whole troop, king-at-arms, heralds, pages and squires, uttered the same cry, to which the general acclamation of the crowd responded.

After which the cavalcade, amid a continual flourish of trumpets, resumed its march, crossed the river, went up the Cité as far as the precincts of Notre-Dame, halted there, and read the same cartel with ceremonial, which was followed by the same shouts and the same flourishes.

At last, by the same bridge it had crossed in coming, the cavalcade returned, reached the Rue Saint-Honoré, proceeded to the square of the Louvre, where the cartel was again read amid the hurrahs and cries of the multitude, which seemed to understand that this was the last spectacle of the sort it was ever likely to witness.

From there the cavalcade, by way of the exterior boulevards, gained the palace of Les Tournelles, whither the king had transported his court.

In fact, he had been informed, eight days before, that the Duke of Alba, who was to represent Philip in the marriage ceremony, and in the festivals to succeed it, was advancing toward Paris with a troop of three hundred Spanish gentlemen.

Thereupon, the king had at once evacuated the Louvre, and retired to the palace of Les Tournelles, where he intended residing with all his court as long as the festivals lasted, abandoning his palace of the Louvre to the Duke of Alba and the illustrious guests he was leading with him.

As soon as tidings reached his ear of the arrival of Alba, the king sent M. de Montmorency to meet him, ordering him not to halt until he came up with him.

The constable met the representative of King Philip at Noyon, and accompanied him on his journey to Paris.

When Montmorency and Alba reached Saint-Denis, they perceived coming toward them Maréchal de Vieilleville, superintendent-general, who was commissioned by the king to see that the Spaniards were treated magnificently.

Two hours after, the entire troop, refreshed and reinvigorated, made their entry into Paris on one fine morning of the last Sunday in May; magnificent, indeed, was the entry of this troop, composed, as it was, of princes, great lords, gentlemen, squires and pages—more than five hundred cavaliers in all.

M. de Vieilleville accompanied the Spaniards through all Paris, from the Barrière Saint-Denis to the Barrière des Sergents; then he lodged, as he had been ordered, the Duke of Alba and the chief Spanish lords in the palace of the Louvre, and the others in the Rue Saint-Honoré.

So when the cartel was read on the Place du Louvre, almost as many Spaniards as French heard it; and, when it was finished, huzzas resounded in both languages.

Now, if the reader who has followed the royal proclamation from the chateau of Les Tournelles to the square of the Hotel de Ville, and from the square of the Hotel de Ville to the precincts of Notre-Dame, will accompany it back to the chateau of Les Tournelles, which it left two hours before, we shall take advantage of his goodwill to examine along with him the great works executed by the king on the occasion of the tournament, by the cartel which we have thought it a duty to give in its entirety, notwithstanding its length, not only as a curious and authentic document, and as a specimen of the manners of that epoch in which France breathed its last chivalrous sigh, but also because the laws of that joust will aid us to a better understanding of the feats about to take place before our eyes.

The exterior list—and by that designation we mean the entire circumference of the structure—was raised on a piece of waste land extending from the palace of Les Tournelles to the Bastille; it was two hundred yards long and a hundred and fifty broad.

The oblong framework of the building was made of planks, and covered with the kind of canvas used for tents, except that it had bright stripes of blue and gold, the heraldic colors of France.

On the two lateral projections galleries were erected for the spectators, ladies and gentlemen of the court.

The side opposite the chateau had three doors, which affected the form of triumphal arches, the door in the centre being more elevated than the two others.

This door also stood back in the list about twelve or fifteen feet, and formed the entrance and the exit of a bastion in which the four holders of the lists had to remain, always ready to meet those who would come to challenge them. In front of this bastion was a transversal barrier, which the squires opened at the cry of "Laissez aller!" The four holders, as we know already, were: Henri II., King of France; Alfonzo of Este, Duke of Ferrara; François de

Lorraine, Duc de Guise; Jacques de Savoie, Duc de Nemours.

Four masts surmounted by streamers bore shields, each, respectively, with the arms of these illustrious champions; the assailants, who entered from the opposite side of the lists—where there was a large hall in which they could be armed and unarmed—were obliged to touch with the handle of their lance the shield of the holder whom they desired to engage, to indicate that they wanted a simple course in honor of the ladies—a courteous feat of arms.

On this side, as well as on the side opposite the chateau, a barrier, when opened, gave passage to horse and cavalier.

Undoubtedly, notwithstanding every precaution, a certain thing might happen, which ordinarily happened in such circumstances: there might arise some strong outburst of hatred, all of a sudden; some unknown knight might ask leave of the king to engage in a fight to the death instead of in a courteous feat of arms, and, having obtained this permission from Henri, who would not have the courage to refuse it, might touch the steel of his adversary with the steel and not with the wood of his lance.

Then, in place of mock combat, there would be a real combat, in which the two adversaries, ceasing to play the ordinary game, would stake their lives.

The interior list—in which the courses were to be run—was about forty-five feet wide; this permitted the holders and assailants to run one against one, or two against two, or even four against four.

This list was bounded on each side by a wooden balustrade three feet high, covered with the same kind of stuff that carpeted all the interior of the tent. Barriers, two of which opened at either extremity, allowed the judges of the camp to enter the list, or the assailants—if one of them obtained permission from the king to joust with a judge of the camp, instead of jousting with one of the appointed holders—to pass from the list into the vast quadrilateral reserved on the right and left for the judges of the camp and for the

galleries, and touch with the wood or steel of their lance the shield of the person with whom they desired to engage.

There were as many judges of the camp as there were holders; namely, four.

These four judges were: the Prince of Savoy, Emmanuel Philibert; the Constable of Montmorency; M. de Boissy, Grand Equerry, who was usually styled M. le Grand; finally, M. de Vieilleville, Grand Chamberlain and Marshal of France.

Each of them had a little bastion surmounted by his arms at one of the angles of the quadrilateral.

Two of these bastions, those of the Duke of Savoy and the constable, extended to the front of the palace of Les Tournelles.

The other two, those of M. de Boissy and M. de Vieilleville, lay against the building constructed for the assailants.

The upper part of the bastion of the holders formed the balcony reserved for the queen, princes, and princesses; it was entirely hung with brocade, and a kind of throne had been erected for the queen; there were also armchairs for the princes and princesses, and tabourets for the ladies attached to the court.

The whole construction was as yet empty, but was visited every day by the king, who was counting the minutes until the spectacle took place, and waited impatiently for holders and assailants, judges and spectators.

IX

NEWS FROM SCOTLAND

ON THE 20th of June, a second cavalcade not less splendid than that of the Duke of Alba arrived from Brussels by the same road, and entered Paris by the same gate.

It was headed by Emmanuel Philibert, future husband of Madame Marguerite of France, Duchesse de Berry.

At Ecouen there was a halt. It was remarked that the prince then entered with his page a house, which seemed to be expecting them, as the door opened as soon as they approached it.

This house, almost entirely hidden by a canopy of verdure, was situated outside the city, and stood isolated about a hundred yards from the highway.

The escort, which did not seem to pay much attention to the disappearance of the prince, halted on the other side of the road, and waited.

At the end of two hours, the prince again appeared, but alone; there was on his lips the sad smile of one who has just accomplished a great sacrifice.

It was whispered that his page, who never left him, had, however, left him now.

"Forward, gentlemen!" said Emmanuel; "we are expected at Paris. Forward!"

Then, turning his head with a sigh, as if he would ask from her he was leaving behind him a last encouragement to fulfil a painful duty, he set spurs to his horse, and was soon at the head of the procession which deployed on the route to Paris.

At Saint-Denis, Emmanuel Philibert encountered his old prisoner, the constable, who came to meet him, as he had come to meet the Duke of Alba, on the part of the king, and also to congratulate him.

Emmanuel received the compliments of the constable courteously, but also gravely and sadly. It might be seen that the man who was pursuing his journey to Paris had left his heart on the way.

Between Paris and Saint-Denis, the prince saw a considerable *cortège* approaching; it was evident that this *cortège* was coming to do him honor. He sent Robert of Rovère, captain of his guards, to reconnoitre this troop.

It was composed of two hundred Savoyard and Piedmontese gentlemen, all clothed in black, and wearing each a gold chain around the neck; the Count of Raconis was at the head of it.

It fell in behind the escort of Emmanuel Philibert. On arriving at the barrier, the *cortège* perceived an equerry who had doubtless been on the watch for them, galloping in the direction of the Faubourg Saint-Antoine. This man was the king's messenger and was going to announce to him the arrival of the prince.

At the boulevard, the *cortège* turned to the left, and advanced toward the Bastille.

The king awaited the prince at the foot of the flight of steps of Les Tournelles, holding his sister Marguerite by the hand. Behind him, on the first step, were Queen Catherine and her five children; on the other steps, arranged as if in an amphitheatre, were the princesses with the ladies and gentlemen attached to their service.

Emmanuel Philibert halted his horse ten yards from the perron, and leaped to the ground. Then he advanced to the king and attempted to kiss his hand; but the latter opened his arms, saying—

"Embrace me, my well-beloved brother!"

Then he presented him to Madame Marguerite.

Madame Marguerite was robed in crimson velvet, the

sleeves being slashed with white; her sole ornament was the magnificent enamelled girdle, with its five gold keys, which the pedler offered her in the Louvre on behalf of her husband.

At the approach of Emmanuel, the crimson of her robe seemed to pass into her cheeks.

She tendered him her hand; and what the pedler had done at the Louvre, the prince did at Les Tournelles, bending a knee to the earth and kissing that royal hand.

He was afterward presented by the king to the queen, princes, and princesses in succession.

Each, to do him honor, wore a jewel that had come from the pack of the Piedmontese pedler—a jewel understood now to be a betrothal gift, as neither of the two travelling merchants had returned to demand its value.

Madame de Valentinois wore her triple crescent of diamonds as a diadem, Madame de Castro her Arabian bracelet, Madame Elisabeth her necklace of pearls less pale than her neck, the dauphin François his handsome poniard, which he had managed to draw from the oak table into which the vigorous pedler had driven it.

Mary Stuart, alone, was without her precious reliquary, which had become the richest ornament of her oratory, and which was, thirty years later, during the night which preceded her death, to receive, in the castle of Fotheringay, the sacred host arrived from Rome, with which she communicated on the very day of her execution.

Emmanuel Philibert, in turn, presented the lords and gentlemen who accompanied him.

These were Counts Egmont and Horn, the two heroes of Saint-Laurent and Gravelines respectively, who were to die on the same scaffold, martyrs of the same faith, nine years later, condemned by the very Duke of Alba now smiling on them in the suite of the king, and waiting till his time should come for shaking hands with them; also William of Nassau, a fine young man of twenty-six, wearing already that air of gloom and sadness which gained him afterward

the surname of the *Taciturn*, and who was styled Prince of Orange, because he inherited, in 1545, the principality of Orange from his uncle René of Nassau; finally, the Dukes of Brunswick and Counts Schwartzburg and Mansfeld, who, more fortunate than the other personages we have just named, have not had the gloomy renown of the scaffold or assassination attached to their name.

Then, as if it was necessary that none should be omitted from this group of men and women marked by the finger of destiny in advance, as if led thither by fatality, a cavalier riding at full speed along the boulevard, seeing the magnificent assemblage at the door of Les Tournelles, brought his horse to a stand, leaped to the ground, threw the reins to his squire, and waited till the king addressed him.

As to the king addressing him, he might be assured; the headlong speed of his course, the skill with which he halted his steed, the graceful elegance with which he leaped from the saddle, were well calculated to attract the attention of such a consummate cavalier as Henri.

So, raising his head above the brilliant crowd around him, the king exclaimed:

"Ah, Lorges! Lorges! the captain of our Scotch Guard, whom we sent to the aid of your mother with three thousand men, my dear Mary, and who, that nothing may be wanting to the brightness of this day, is come to give us news of your kingdom of Scotland. Come hither, Montgomery, come hither!" continued the king; "and as we are going to have grand festivals and rejoicings, take care of the brands! A proverb says we must never play with fire."

It is useless to explain to our readers that King Henri was alluding to the accident caused by Jacques de Montgomery, father of Gabriel, when, at the sham siege of the Hotel Saint-Paul, which he defended against François I., he struck the latter on the chin with a burning brand, and the injury which was the consequence led to the fashion of wearing the hair short and the beard long—a fashion that lasted more than a hundred years.

Montgomery advanced toward Henri, little suspecting that an accident far graver than that which wounded François I., through the instrumentality of his father, was to be encountered by Henri II. in the full tide of those festivals in which he delighted so much—and an accident of which he himself was to be the unhappy cause.

He was bringing tidings from Scotland of a very opposite nature; the political condition of the country was satisfactory, but the religious was gloomy in the extreme.

Elizabeth of England was not interfering with her neighbor, the frontiers were quiet: but the interior of Scotland was on fire.

The conflagration was the Reformation; the incendiary was John Knox.

That terrible name was hardly known in France when Gabriel de Lorges pronounced it. What mattered it, in effect, to this elegant court of the Valois, living in the chateau of the Louvre, Les Tournelles, and Fontainebleau; what mattered it to François I., with his Duchesse d'Etampes, his Leonardo da Vinci, Andrea del Sarto, Benvenuto Cellini, Bosso, Primaticc, his Rabelais, Budé, Lascaris, and Marot; what mattered it to Henri II., with his Duchesse de Valentinois, with Ronsard, Philibert Delorme, Montaigne, Beza, Du Bellay, L'Hopital, Jean Goujon, Serlio, Pilon, Catherine de Médicis, and her maids of honor; what mattered it to all this brilliant, brave, frivolous, atheistic world, in whose veins ran a double stream, the French and Italian blood, mingling unceasingly history and romance, chivalry and politics, which was doing its best to make of Paris a Rome, an Athens, and a Cordova at the same time; what mattered it to all these kings, princes, and princesses, to all these noblemen, to all these sculptors, painters, writers, and architects, resplendent with the radiance of glory, art, and poetry—what mattered it to them what was passing on a corner of the globe which they regarded as the extremity of the civilized world, among a people poor, ignorant, and brutal, considered as a mere dependant on the kingdom of

France, one of those jewels more curious on account of the metal than of the workmanship, which a queen adds to the chatelaine hanging at her girdle? This land revolt one day against its young King François or against its young Queen Mary? Well, a brilliant company would set out on gilded barges, just like William when he conquered England, or Roger when he conquered Sicily; would take Scotland, and, placing a bracelet of gold on her foot in guise of a chain, would lead her to the knees of the granddaughter of Edward and the daughter of James V.

Now, Gabriel de Lorges was come to rectify the ideas of the court of France with respect to Scotland: he was come to tell the astonished Mary Stuart that her principal enemy was not the great Elizabeth of England, but a poor renegade priest of the Pontifical court named John Knox.

He had seen this John Knox in the midst of a popular riot, and he had a terrible remembrance of him: he was endeavoring to impress on the future Queen of Scotland his ideas as to the importance of the man. He had followed him during the riot, of which John Knox speaks in these terms:

"I saw the idol of Dagon[1] broken on the pavement, and priests and monks flying headlong, crosiers flung aside, mitres broken, surplices on the ground, skull-caps in rags; I saw gray monks gaping open-mouthed, black monks puffing out their cheeks, gasping sacristans scattering like crows, and lucky was he who reached his home as speedily as possible: for never was such a panic seen among this generation of Anti-Christ!"

The man whose mouth unchained such a tempest must have been a Titan.

Indeed, John Knox was one of those elements with human faces we see appear amid great political or religious convulsions.

If they arise in Scotland or England at the time of the

[1] The crucifix.

Presbyterian reformation, they are called John Knox or Cromwell.

If they arise in France at the time of the political reformation, they are called Mirabeau or Danton.

John Knox was born in East Lothian in 1505; he was, at the time we have reached, fifty-four. He was about to be ordained when the words of Luther resounded from Worms to Edinburgh; immediately, with all the violence of his character, John Knox began to preach against the Pope and against the Mass. He was appointed chaplain to King Edward VI. of England in 1552, but was obliged to quit England on the accession of Mary; he retired to Geneva, where he was near Calvin. When Mary was dead and Elizabeth on the throne, he judged the moment favorable to return to Scotland, where he carried thousands of copies of the pamphlet published by him at Geneva, and which was at once an attack on the actual regency of Mary of Lorraine and on the future reign of Mary Stuart.[1]

The tree of reform, planted by him, had grown during his absence, and sheltered under its shade the three-fourths of Scotland.

He had quitted a Catholic country; he returned to a Protestant one.

This was the man Mary had to fear.

But what? Had Mary anything to fear, then?

Scotland was for her not only distant in space, but far away in the future.

What had she, the wife of the Dauphin of France, to do with Scotland—she, the daughter-in-law of a king scarcely forty-one years old, hale and vigorous, and as ardent as a young man; she the bride of a husband of nineteen years?

What was the worst prediction that could be made to her? That her father-in-law might reign only twenty years, her husband forty. She was as yet ignorant of the fact that the Valois die young.

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[1] This pamphlet was entitled "Against the Government of Women."

Why should she care for that wreath of wild roses, bred among rocks, which was called the crown of Scotland, when she had in perspective that crown of France, which, according to the saying of the Emperor Maximilian, God would give to his second son, if he had two?

There was, however, in existence that horoscope which an astrologer had composed on the day of Henri II.'s birth, which the constable had so much ridiculed, which the king had intrusted to the hands of M. de l'Aubespine, and which said that the king would be slain in a duel or in a single combat. There was that fatal mark which Gabriel de Lorges had between the two eyebrows, and which had disturbed Charles V. so much until his astrologer told him that this mark affected none but a prince of the *fleur-de-lis*.

But what probability was there that one of the greatest princes of Christendom would ever fight a duel? What probability was there that Gabriel de Lorges, Comte de Montgomery, one of the most devoted lords Henri had, his captain of the Scotch Guard, who had almost saved his life in that encounter with the wild boar in the forest of Saint-Germain, to which we have introduced our readers, should ever raise a parricidal hand against the royal author of his fortunes?

Neither reality, nor prediction, nor present, nor future could depress then, even instinctively, the joyous faces of that splendid court, when the bells of Notre-Dame announced that all was ready, even God, for the first of the marriages about to be celebrated—that of Philip II., represented by the Duke of Alba, with Elisabeth of France, called Elisabeth of the peace, by reason of the influence this marriage had on the peace of the world.

X.

THE JOUSTS OF THE RUE SAINT-ANTOINE

IT WAS on the 27th of June, 1559, that the bells of Notre-Dame shook the old towers of Philip Augustus with the announcement of the solemnization of the King of Spain's marriage with the daughter of the King of France.

The Duke of Alba, accompanied by the Prince of Orange and Count Egmont, represented, as we have said, King Philip II.

Poor Elisabeth's limbs failed to sustain her as she reached the precincts of the metropolitan church; it was necessary to support her arms, and almost to carry her to the nave. This said service was rendered her by William of Orange and Count Egmont—the one marked by fate for the bullet of Balthasar Gérard, the other for the scaffold of the Duke of Alba.

Emmanuel regarded her with a sympathetic smile, the significance of which was divined only by Scianca-Ferro, whom the prince had left at Ecouen.

After the ceremony they returned to the chateau of Les Tournelles, where a grand dinner was waiting. There were concerts during the day; and when evening came, Emmanuel opened the ball with the young Queen of Spain, whose only consolation was the absence of her royal spouse for some days longer. Jacques de Nemours danced with Princess Marguerite, François de Montmorency with Diane de Castro, and the dauphin, whom we ought to have named first, with Queen Mary Stuart.

Friends and foes were, for the moment, united, and great enmities were, if not dead, at least sleeping. Still, friends and enemies formed two strongly marked and divided groups.

On the one side was the constable with all his sons, as well as Coligny, Dandelot, and their gentlemen.

On the other, François de Guise with all his brothers: the Cardinal de Lorraine, the Ducs d'Aumale, Elbeuf—one forgets the names of these six sons by the same father.

The first, gay, triumphant, and joyous.

The second, gloomy, austere, and menacing.

It was said quite low that if, in the lists to-morrow, one of the Montmorencys should tilt against one of the Guises, there would, instead of a joust, be a true combat.

But Henri had taken his precautions.

He had forbidden Coligny and Dandelot to touch any bucklers except those of Jacques de Nemours, Alfonzo of Este, and his own.

The same prohibition was made in the case of Damville and François de Montmorency.

The Guises were at first wishful not to appear at these festivities. Duc François spoke of the necessity of making a tour in his principality; but Catherine and his brother persuaded him to abandon a resolution which would have been as imprudent as are all resolutions dictated by chagrin and pride.

He remained then, and the event proved that he did well to remain.

At midnight the assembly broke up. The Duke of Alba conducted Elisabeth to her chamber, placed his right leg in the bed, and covered it with a sheet; then, after a few seconds, drew it out from the bedclothes, saluted, and left. The marriage was completed.

The next day, the entire court was awakened by a flourish of trumpets, with the exception of King Henri, who had not slept, so great was his hurry to reach those jousts, the anticipation of which had so long been his delight.

So, though the tournament was not to begin until after breakfast, as soon as daylight appeared King Henri wandered from the lists to the stables, passing in review his magnificent stallion and his nineteen horses ready saddled and caparisoned, the latter the splendid gift of Emmanuel Philibert.

The breakfast hour having arrived, holders and judges of the camp ate apart, at a round table, intended to be a copy of King Arthur's, and were waited on by the ladies.

The four attendants on the illustrious guests were Queen Catherine, Princess Marguerite, little Queen Mary, and Madame de Valentinois.

The breakfast over, each passed into his apartment to arm himself.

The king had on an admirable cuirass of Milan steel all damascened with gold and silver; his helmet, surmounted by the royal crown, represented a salamander with wings spread; his shield, like that suspended at the bastion, bore a crescent shining in a clear sky, with this device: DONEC TOTUM IMPLEAT ORBEM !

His colors were white and black, the same adopted by Diane de Poitiers on the death of her husband, M. de Brézé.

M. de Guise was clad in his battle cuirass, the same he wore at the siege of Metz; it showed the very visible impress—which may be noticed on it even to-day by those who care to visit the Museum of Artillery at Paris, where it is placed—of the five balls that were flattened on it at the siege of Metz.

His buckler, like that of Henri, represented a sky; only this sky was not so clear. A white cloud veiled a star of gold.

His device was: PRESENT, BUT HIDDEN.

His colors were white and crimson—"colors," says Brantome, "of a lady I could name, a maid of honor at the court whose servant he was."

Unfortunately, Brantome does not name the lady, and we are forced, by our ignorance, to be as discreet as he.

M. de Nemours had a Milanese cuirass, a present from King Henri II. His buckler represented an angel or a love —it was difficult to decide which—bearing a bouquet of flowers, with this device: ANGEL OR LOVE, IT COMES FROM HEAVEN!

His colors were yellow and black—colors which, according to the same Brantome, signify, *Joyousness and firmness*, or, *Firm in joyousness.* "For he was then," it was said, "enjoying one of the most beautiful ladies of the world, and therefore was bound to be firm and faithful to her for good reason; for better he could never meet and have."

Finally, the Duke of Ferrara—that young prince as yet unknown, but destined to have a melancholy celebrity as the jailer of Tasso, whom he shut up for seven years in an insane asylum—was armed with an admirable Venetian cuirass. His shield represented Hercules prostrating the Nemean lion, with this device: WHO IS STRONG IS A GOD.

His colors were yellow and red.

At noon, the gates were opened.

In an instant, the places reserved in the galleries were occupied by the lords and gentlemen whose names gave them a right to be present at the tournament.

The royal balcony was next filled also.

On the first day Madame de Valentinois was to give the prize. This prize was a magnificent chain resplendent with rubies, sapphires, and emeralds, separated by crescents of gold trebly enlaced.

These crescents were, as we know, the arms of the fair Duchesse de Valentinois.

On the second day the victor was to be crowned by the hand of Madame Marguerite. The prize was a Turkish battle-axe, exquisitely wrought—a present from Soliman to François I.

The third day—the day of honor—was reserved for Catherine de Médicis. The prize was a sword whose hilt and handle had been chiselled by Benvenuto Cellini.

At noon there was a flourish of trumpets from the musi-

cians stationed in a balcony in front of the balcony of the princes and princesses.

The hour for the joust had arrived.

The pages were the first to enter the lists, which they did like a flock of birds. There were twelve pages for each holder, forty-eight in all, each clad in silk and velvet of the same color as the colors of his master.

Then came four squires; their mission was to pick up the broken lances, and to aid the combatants, if they needed it.

Then, finally, the four masters of the camp came forth, armed *cap-à-pie*, and with lowered visor, on horses similarly armed, and with their caparisons trailing on the ground. Each, baton in hand, stationed himself in front of the lateral barriers, and stood as motionless as an equestrian statue.

Then the trumpeters of the four holders appeared on the four gates of the bastion, and sounded their defiance to the four cardinal points.

A trumpet responded; and a knight fully armed, with visor lowered and lance at rest, was seen to issue forth from the gate of the assailants.

The collar of the Golden Fleece hung from his neck; by that badge which he had received, in 1546, from Charles V., at the same time as the Emperor Maximilian, Cosmo de Médicis, Grand Duke of Florence, Albert, Duke of Bavaria, Emmanuel Philibert, Duke of Savoy, Octavio Farnese, Duke of Parma, and Ferdinand Alvarez, Duke of Alba, the spectators recognized Lamoral, Count Egmont. The plumes of his helmet were white and green: they were the colors of Sabine, Countess Palatine, Duchess of Bavaria, whom he had married five years before, at Spires, in the presence of the Emperor Charles V. as well as in that of Philip II., King of Naples, whom he loved tenderly and faithfully until his death.

He advanced, managing his steed with that grace which had gained him the reputation of one of the finest horsemen

in the Spanish army—a reputation of such high degree that it was said King Henri, who in this respect had no rival, was jealous of him.

When he had ridden three-fourths of the list he saluted with his lance and with his head the balcony of the queen and princesses, bending the lance-head to the ground, his helmet to the neck of his horse, and touched with the wood of his lance the shield of King Henri II.

Then, amid resounding flourishes, he forced his steed backward the whole length of the list, and laid his lance in rest on the other side of the barrier.

As the joust was courteous, it was permitted, according to the customs of the tourney, to strike only between the neck and waist, or, as was said at that epoch, between the four members.

At the moment Egmont put his lance in rest, the king rode forth, fully armed.

Even if Henri had not been a king, the applause that broke out at sight of him would not have been less universal. It would be impossible to have a better seat on horseback, or to be at once more firm and graceful in the saddle than was the King of France.

Like Count Egmont, he held his lance ready to his hand. After making his horse turn, in order to salute the queen and princesses, he turned again to his adversary, and levelled his lance.

Immediately the squires raised the barriers, and the judges of the camp, seeing that the combatants were ready, cried in unison—

"Laissez aller!"

The two cavaliers were only waiting for this moment to rush on each other.

Each struck his opponent full on the breast.

The king and Count Egmont were too good cavaliers to let themselves be unhorsed, and yet the shock was so terrible that Egmont lost a stirrup; and his lance, all quivering, dropped from his hand, and fell some paces from him, while

the lance of the king flew in three or four pieces, leaving in his hand only a useless splinter.

The two horses, frightened by the shock and the report of the shock, fell back on their haunches trembling.

Henri flung away the splinter of his lance.

Thereupon, while the lists were resounding with the applause of the spectators, two squires leaped over the barriers —one to pick up the lance of Count Egmont and hand it to him, the other to offer a new lance to the king.

Both retired from the field, and placed their lances in rest.

The trumpets sounded anew; the barriers were reopened, and the judges cried a second time—

"'Laissez aller!"

This time the two lances were shattered; Henri was bent back, as a tree is bent by the wind, almost to the crupper of his horse. Count Egmont lost both stirrups, and was obliged to hold on by the pommel of his saddle.

The king recovered himself; the count took his hand off the pommel; and the two cavaliers, whom any one would think ought to have been unhorsed by the shock, were again firmly seated in the saddle.

The splinters had flown all around them. They let the squires pick them up, and returned, each behind his barrier.

There new lances were presented to them, stronger than the first.

Horses and cavaliers seemed equally impatient: the horses neighed and foamed. It was evident that these noble animals, excited by the course and by the trumpets much more than by the spur, were interested in the combat for its own sake.

The trumpets sounded. All the spectators shouted with joy, and clapped their hands, as happened a hundred years later, when Louis XIV. appeared on a stage, playing the part of the Sun in the ballad of the "Four Seasons."

But Henri II., as a warrior of the Middle Ages, Louis

XIV., as a charlatan of all ages, were each the expression of the France of their epoch—the first represented the France of chivalry; the second, the France of *gallantry*.

The applause was so loud that the cry of "Laissez aller!" could scarcely be heard.

This time the shock was even more terrible than the two others: one of the feet of King Henri slipped out of the stirrup under the shock of Count Egmont's lance, which was broken in pieces, while the lance of the king remained whole. The blow was so rough that the count's horse reared on its hind legs, and, the girth being broken by the violence of the shock, slipped over the crupper, so that a strange thing happened: the rider, although he did not lose his stirrups, found himself on the ground.

But, as he fell on his feet, this fall, which it was impossible to avoid, served but to exemplify the skill and address of the consummate cavalier.

Nevertheless, the count, saluting Henri, declared himself vanquished, and courteously placed himself at the disposal of the victor.

"Count," said the king, "you are the prisoner of the Duchesse de Valentinois. Go, then, and place yourself at her mercy; it is she, and not I, who will decide your fate."

"Sire," replied Egmont, "if I could have divined that so sweet a slavery was reserved for me, I would have let myself be taken the first time I fought with your Majesty."

"And that would have been a great saving to me, both in men and money, M. le Comte," said the king, determined not to be outdone in courtesy; "for you would have spared me Saint-Laurent and Gravelines!"

The count retired, and five minutes after was on the balcony, kneeling at the feet of the Duchesse de Valentinois, who bound his two hands with a magnificent pearl necklace.

During this time the king, who had accomplished his

three courses, drew breath, and left the place to the Duc de Guise, second holder.

The duke jousted with Count Horn; the three courses were finished not greatly to the disadvantage of the Flemish general, considering that he was tilting against one of the best jousters of his time.

After the third course, with a courtesy equal to that of Count Egmont, he acknowledged himself vanquished.

Then came the turn of Jacques de Nemours. He jousted with a Spaniard named Don Francisco Rigonnès; at the first lance-thrust the Spaniard lost a stirrup; at the second, he was thrown back on the crupper of his horse; at the third, he was lifted out of the saddle and thrown on the ground.

He was, for that matter, the only Spaniard who tried his fortune in the tournament; our neighbors from beyond the Pyrenees recognized that in these kinds of contests they were our inferiors, and did not care to risk their reputation, already somewhat damaged by the check of Don Francisco Rigonnès.

Remained the Duke of Ferrara. He jousted with Dandelot; but, although they separated on almost equal terms, the bluff defender of Saint-Quentin declared, on retiring, that he preferred a real combat with an enemy of France to all these sports, somewhat pagan-looking to a man like him, converted scarcely a year ago to the Reformed religion.

Consequently, he declared his brother Coligny might take his place if the thing pleased him; but, as for himself, he would tilt no more. And, as Dandelot was a rigid man, he kept his word.

The first day ended with a joust of four holders with four assailants; these four assailants were Damville against the king, Montgomery against the Duc de Guise, the Duke of Brunswick against Jacques de Nemours, and Count Mansfeld against Alfonzo of Este.

The king excepted, who, either on account of his real

superiority or the courtesy of his adversary, obtained a signal advantage over Damville, the forces were evenly balanced.

The king quitted the lists, intoxicated with joy.

It is true he did not hear what was whispered around him; nor was this surprising: kings seldom hear even what is spoken aloud.

What was whispered was that the constable was too good a courtier not to have cautioned his eldest son as to the respect with which one ought to treat a king, even with a lance in hand.

XI

THE CARTEL

THE next day King Henri was in such haste to renew the jousts that he advanced the dinner an hour, in order to be able to enter the lists at noon precisely.

At the moment the trumpets announced the triple entrance of the pages, squires, and judges of the camp—an entrance we have tried to describe in the preceding chapter—a cavalier, in a broad-brimmed hat that concealed the upper part of his face, and enveloped, in spite of the heat inseparable from a day toward the end of June, in a large sad-colored cloak, issued from the stables of Les Tournelles, mounted on a Barbary horse, whose fleetness could be appreciated when the rider had forced his way through the crowds that thronged all the approaches to the chateau, near which the jousts were held.

In fact, on arriving at the corner of the Minimes, he fell into a quick trot, which, near the Corderie des Enfants-Rouges, changed to a gallop, which allowed him to clear the route between Paris and Ecouen in an hour.

After reaching Ecouen, he crossed the city, always at the same rate of speed, and did not halt until he came to the door of a little isolated house, sheltered by great trees—a house at which we also have halted with Emmanuel Philibert at the time of the latter's arrival in Paris.

Mules laden with baggage, a horse all saddled, stamping in the yard, indicated that some one was preparing for departure.

Emmanuel Philibert cast a glance round upon all these arrangements, which showed that, although the departure

had been decided on, it had not yet taken place, tied his horse to a ring, mounted the stairs leading to the first story, and rushed into a chamber where a young woman was sitting, absorbed completely in her own sad thoughts, after fastening the last button in a travelling dress, sombre in color and simple in form.

At the moment the prince raised his head, she uttered a cry, and, yielding to the impulse of her heart, darted forward.

Emmanuel received her in his arms.

"Leona," said he, in a tone of reproach, "is this what you have promised me?"

But the young woman could only stammer, with trembling lips and closed eyes, the name of Emmanuel.

The prince, still holding her in his arms, stepped back to a kind of sofa, and sat down, releasing Leona, without, however, ceasing to support her, so that she lay, partly reclining, with her head on one of his knees.

"Emmanuel! Emmanuel!" the young woman kept on murmuring, not having strength to utter anything except that beloved name.

Emmanuel for a long time regarded her in silence, with an ineffable expression of tenderness. Then, when at last she again opened her eyes—

"It is very fortunate," said he, "that certain expressions in your letter of yesterday betrayed your intention, that a sorrowful dream, in which I saw you all in tears and clad in the garb of a nun, revealed to me your design. Else you were gone, and I should not see you until my return to Piedmont!"

"Or rather, Emmanuel," murmured the young woman in a dying voice, "you would never have seen me again."

Emmanuel turned pale and shuddered. Leona did not see the paleness of his cheeks, but she felt the shuddering of his body.

"No! no!" she said, "I was wrong! Pardon me, Emmanuel, pardon!"

"Remember what you have promised, Leona," said Emmanuel, with the same grave air he would have had in recalling an engagement to a friend instead of to a mistress. "It was in the Hotel de Ville of Brussels, with your hand on a sacred image, your brother—that man whose life we both saved, and who has become the unconscious agent of our misery—your brother awaiting at the door the favorable response which, in your heavenly goodness, you prayed me to make him, you promised, Leona, you swore that you would be eternally mine, that you would never quit me until the eve of my marriage, and that then, until the death of one of us released the other from all obligation, we should meet on the 17th of November each year, in the little house of the village of Oleggio, into which you, a dying child, were carried by me to your mother, already dead. Often have you said to me, 'You saved my life, Emmanuel! My life is yours; do with it what you will.' Well, since your life is mine, since you have declared so in the presence of Christ, do not, then, sever that life from mine until the last moment possible. And, in order to accomplish the religious fulfilment of that promise, without which, as you know, Leona, I should have refused everything, without which I am still prepared to refuse everything, stimulate your self-sacrifice to its furthest limits—that self-sacrifice which is the supreme virtue of the woman who loves, and makes her more than angel, since the angels need not sacrifice earthly passions to their devotion, like us unhappy mortals!"

"Oh, Emmanuel, Emmanuel!" murmured Leona, who seemed to return to life and happiness under the looks and voice of her lover; "it is not self-sacrifice that fails me! It is—"

Emmanuel fixed on that charming head a questioning gaze.

"It is—?" he asked.

"Alas!" cried Leona, "it is jealousy! Oh, I love you! I love you! I love you so much, Emmanuel!"

And the lips of the two lovers met with a double cry of happiness.

"Jealous?" inquired Emmanuel; "you jealous? and of what?"

"Oh, I am so no longer," murmured the young girl; "a love like ours is eternal. I have felt, under your kisses, that death cannot shatter mine, and that it will be rewarded in heaven! How, then, could yours die on earth?"

"You are right, my own Leona," said the prince, giving to his voice those tender and persuasive tones which it was so susceptible of taking. "God has made an exception in my favor: when sending me the heavy burden of a crown, He also bestowed the invisible hand of one of His angels to sustain it on my head. Listen, Leona; that which will exist between us will resemble in nothing that which exists between other lovers. We shall always live, united to each other by that indissoluble union of hearts which can brave time and even absence; except the actual presence, except the sight of each other every hour and every moment, our life will be the same. I know well it is the life of winter, without sun or fruit or flowers; but still it is life! The earth feels that it is not dead; we shall feel that we always love!"

"Emmanuel! Emmanuel!" said the young woman, "oh, you support me now, you console me in turn, and give me new life!"

"And now," said the prince, "let us come down to earth again, and tell me, Leona, what makes you jealous?"

"Since you left me, Emmanuel, only four leagues separated us, and I have seen you but twice!"

"Thanks, my own Leona!" said Emmanuel; "but you know there is high festival in the chateau of Les Tournelles where I dwell—a sad festival, for that matter, for two hearts: that of poor Elisabeth and mine. Still, both of us must play our parts in these rejoicings; we must appear in them, and the king summons me to his presence almost every moment."

"But, then, how does it happen," inquired Leona, "that, in the very middle of the jousting, at the very time when you, as one of the judges, ought to be present, you have left everything to come and see me?"

Emmanuel smiled.

"That is precisely the thing that leaves me free! I ought to be there, but with visor lowered. Suppose that a man of my figure should put on my cuirass, mount my horse, and perform my office as judge of the camp?"

"Ah! Scianea-Ferro!" cried the young woman; "that good Scianca-Ferro! dear Emmanuel!"

"Then I, in my restlessness and torture, on account of your letter and my dream—I decide to see Leona and ask for a renewal of the promise which she was on the point of forgetting. I strengthen my soul in her soul, my heart in her heart, and we separate as strong as that giant who had only to touch the earth to recover his vigor."

And the lips of the young man touched a second time those of the young girl, and, in touching them, enveloped both in that cloud of flame which hid Mars and Venus from the looks of the other gods.

Let us leave them to drink to the dregs the golden chalice of their last hours of joy, and see what was passing, during the time, in the lists of the palace of Les Tournelles.

At the moment Emmanuel Philibert was riding from the palace at full speed, leaving Scianca-Ferro to put on his armor and fulfil his duties, a squire knocked at the door of the palace, and inquired for Prince Emmanuel Philibert.

The young man was informed that an unknown squire, who insisted on seeing the prince himself, was obstinate in his determination to speak with him. Scianca-Ferro represented the prince: moreover, Emmanuel kept no secrets from his faithful squire.

He put on his casque, the only part of his armor still

wanting, and, retiring to the most obscure corner of the apartment—

"Let him enter," said he.

The squire appeared on the threshold. He was clad in sombre garb, and bore no blazon and no device which might enable a spectator to guess from whom he came.

"Have I the honor of addressing his Highness Prince Emmanuel Philibert?" he asked.

"You can see for yourself," replied Scianca-Ferro, thus eluding a positive answer.

"Here is a letter from my master. He awaits an acceptance or a refusal."

Scianca-Ferro took the letter, unsealed it, and read the following lines:

"A man who has sworn the death of Prince Emmanuel Philibert challenges him to a combat *à outrance*, in the jousts to be held to-day, with lance, sword, axe, mace, and poniard, renouncing in advance all claim to mercy, if he is conquered, the prince also renouncing all claim to mercy at the hands of this man, if this man is the conqueror.

"Prince Emmanuel Philibert is spoken of as a brave captain; if he is not unworthy of this reputation, he will accept the combat proposed, and will also consent to obtain from King Henri II. every guarantee for the conqueror.

"A Mortal Enemy."

Scianca-Ferro read the letter without manifesting any sign of disturbance; and, turning to the squire, "Tell your master," he answered, "that it shall be as he desires; and that, as soon as the king has run his courses, he has but to present himself in the lists, and touch with his lance the shield of Prince Emmanuel. This shield is on the right of the bastion, in the quadrilateral, hanging below that of the constable, and opposite M. de Villeneuve's. I pledge my word that every guarantee will be given by the king."

"My master has sent a written cartel; he desires a written guarantee," replied the squire.

At this moment appeared M. de Vieilleville; he came to learn if Emmanuel Philibert was ready.

Scianca-Ferro lowered the visor of his helmet, and advanced toward the grand chamberlain.

"M. de Vieilleville," he said, "will you be so good as to ask his Majesty to write the word *accordé* at the bottom of this letter? I beg the king to grant me this grace, the refusal of which would be a stain on my honor."

Scianca-Ferro was entirely clad in the armor of the duke; as the visor was lowered, it was impossible to see his blond hair, his blue eyes, and red beard. M. de Vieilleville bowed low before him whom he believed to be the prince; and, as the hour of jousting was near, he hastened to fulfil the commission with which he was charged.

Five minutes after he returned with the letter.

The word *accordé* was written at the bottom, and followed by the royal signature.

Scianca-Ferro silently presented the letter to the squire, who bowed and withdrew.

The pretended prince did not delay long; he entered his apartment to take his sword and mace of battle; and, as he passed in front of the armorer, he ordered him to sharpen three lances.

After this he took the place before the barrier occupied by the prince on the evening before.

The trumpets gave the signal; the heralds cried that the lists were open, and the joust began.

The first who ran was the king; he broke his three lances —one against the Duke of Brunswick, the second against Count Horn, the third against Count Mansfeld.

Next came the turn of the Duc de Guise, then that of Jacques de Nemours, then that of the Duke of Ferrara.

All these jousts were marvels of address and of strength; but it was evident the attention of the illustrious assembly was entirely absorbed in the expectation of some great event.

This great event was the combat authorized by the king.

Henri had not had the courage to keep the whole secret; without saying who was the holder, he had announced the struggle.

Every one knew the day would not pass, according to all probability, without seeing this arena, that had been prepared for a festival, reddened with blood.

The women shuddered at the idea of a combat with naked weapons; but, while shuddering, they awaited, perhaps with more impatience than the men, this moment of supreme emotion.

What added to the curiosity was the ignorance of the spectators as to the individual holder or judge of the camp who had been challenged.

The king also left in doubt whether the combat was to take place on the second or third day of the tournament.

Now, as the king, the Duc de Guise, the Duc de Nemours, and the Duke of Ferrara had all run their courses, without anything like what was rumored happening, it was beginning to be believed that either the report was erroneous, or the combat adjourned to the third day.

After the joust of the Duke of Ferrara was to come the general joust, as on the evening before.

The trumpets gave the signal for this joust; but, instead of the four trumpets of the four assailants replying together, a single trumpet was heard sounding a foreign air, with sharp and menacing notes.

A shiver ran along the spectators; a murmur of satisfied expectation, blended with expressions of terror, rose from the stands; heads waved as in a field of wheat tossed by the wind.

Two persons, in all the immense assembly, knew for whom this trumpet sounded: these two persons were the king and Scianca-Ferro, who, in the eyes of the king, as of everybody, was no other than Emmanuel Philibert.

The king stretched his head outside the bastion to see if the duke was at his post.

Scianca-Ferro, who understood the king's anxiety, bowed slightly over the neck of his horse.

"Good courage, fair brother-in-law!" said the king.

Scianca-Ferro smiled under his visor, as if any one could have seen him, and threw back his head, shaking the plumes of his crest.

At that moment all eyes turned to the bastion of the assailants. A cavalier in full armor was crossing the threshold, and entering the lists.

XII

THE COMBAT WITH NAKED WEAPONS

THIS cavalier bore a lance, with the point sharpened, resting on one of the stirrups; a sword hung from one saddle-bow, and an axe from the other.

His squire was behind him, and bore two lances with sharpened points also.

The cavalier was clad in black armor; the plumes of his casque were black; his horse was black, and caparisoned in black.

The only things bright about him were the blade of his axe and the point of his lance, which shone with a sinister radiance.

On his shield was no device, on his targe no blazon to give a hint of the nation or class to which he belonged.

A gold chain on his neck and gold spurs on his heels seemed to show, however, that he was a knight.

At sight of this gloomy personage, who seemed the very envoy of death, all the spectators, except perhaps one, felt a cold shiver run along their veins.

The black rider advanced for about two-thirds of the list, saluted the two queens and the princesses, forced his horse backward, and soon found himself on the other side of the barrier, which was closed in front of him.

Then he called his squire; the latter laid on the ground the two lances he was holding, in case the first should be broken, took the one his master held, opened the transversal barrier which gave entrance into the quadrilateral, and, marching straight to the bastion of Duke Emmanuel Phili-

bert, he touched with the lance-head the blazon of Savoy, surrounded with the personal device of the duke, *Spoliatis arma supersunt!*

A doleful sound was heard as steel struck steel. "Emmanuel Philibert, Duke of Savoy, before the King of France, before the princes, before the noble lords, barons, and gentlemen here present; before these queens, princesses, and noble ladies who hear and regard us, my master summons thee to the combat *à outrance*, *sans miséricorde ni merci*, taking God to witness the justice of his cause and all here present as judges of the manner in which he demeans himself. God and victory for the good right!"

A weak cry responded to this challenge; it escaped from the pale lips of Madame Marguerite, who was almost in a fainting condition.

Then there was deep silence, during which nothing was heard save these words, pronounced by him whom every one took for Emmanuel Philibert:

"'Tis well. Tell your master that I accept the combat according to the conditions proposed by him, with God for judge, the king, princes, gentlemen, lords, barons, queens, princesses, and noble ladies here present for witnesses, and that I renounce his mercy as he renounces mine. And now let God decide on which side is the right!"

Then, with the same calmness with which he would have asked for his baton as judge of the camp, "My lance!" said he.

A squire advanced, bearing three lances with sharp and shining points; Scianca-Ferro took the first one that came to his hand, gave his steed whip and spur, jumped the lateral barrier, and was in the lists in a moment.

Behind him came a cavalier in full armor, who took the place in the quadrilateral he had vacated.

It was the king in person, and he had decided to do the two adversaries the honor of acting as their judge of the camp.

Profound silence had reigned ever since the black cava-

lier had entered the lists, both during his challenge and during the reply to it.

There was, however, some slight applause at the ease and grace with which he made his horse jump the barrier, weighed down as the noble animal was by his *chanfrein* and the armor of the rider; but these applauses died away almost immediately, as in a church or sepulchral cave the voice, at first loud, suddenly sinks on perceiving the sanctity of the place or the solemnity of the situation.

During this time the two adversaries measured each other with their eyes, and made ready their lances.

The squires then took away the barriers, and the king cried, "Laissez aller!"

The three other judges of the camp seemed to have conceded to him this right, as if it belonged to a king alone to give the signal of a combat on the result of which was staked the life or death of a man.

No sooner was the cry of "Laissez aller!" heard than the two adversaries rushed on each other.

They met in the middle of the lists. Each had aimed at a different object: the black cavalier directed his lance against the visor of his adversary; the latter struck his full on the breast.

Only a few seconds after the shock could it be judged what success either combatant had.

The black cavalier had struck off the ducal crown from the casque of Emmanuel Philibert, while the lance of him who had assumed the name and armor of the latter was broken in three pieces against the steel cuirass of his adversary.

Such was the violence of the blow that the black cavalier was bent back on the crupper of his horse, and lost a stirrup. But in a moment the stirrup was recovered, and he was firm in the saddle.

Each of the combatants wheeled round and returned to the starting point.

The squire of Scianca-Ferro brought him a new lance.

The black cavalier also took a new lance, as his first one had been blunted on the helmet of the duke.

No cry, no applause, no bravo, saluted this encounter; a universal feeling of terror had taken possession of the assembly.

In fact, from the manner in which the two adversaries met, there could be no doubt now that this was a real duel —a duel to the death, *sans miséricordi ni merci*, as the black cavalier had said.

When the lances were selected and laid in rest, the king a second time uttered the words, "Laissez aller!"

Again a sound, like to the rolling of thunder, was heard; then a shock resounded, as if the thunder had burst. The two horses were bent back on their haunches; the two lances were broken; but while the cuirass of the duke showed the impression of the black cavalier's lance-head only, the splinter of the lance of Scianca-Ferro remained imbedded in the cuirass of his adversary.

For a moment it was thought that the breast was pierced as well as the cuirass; but it was not so. The steel, though passing through the armor, was arrested at the meshes of the gorget.

The black knight seized the splinter with both hands, and tried to pull it out; but the three attempts he made were useless, and he was forced to have recourse to his squire, who was successful only after the second effort.

There had been nothing so far decisive, however, and yet it was felt that the vantage, if there was any, was with the Duke of Savoy.

The two queens were beginning to recover their composure: this terrible game was carrying them away in spite of themselves. Madame Marguerite alone, at each course, averted her eyes, which turned again to the lists only when she heard these words uttered by the young princesses and dauphin—

"Look! why do you not look?"

The king was at the height of his joy; he was the wit-

ness of a real combat. Scarcely did the thought strike him that every chance is uncertain, and his sister might be a widow before she was a duchess; it was easy to see he had no doubt as to the victory, from the manner in which he cried—

"Courage, fair brother-in-law! Victory to the shield of gules and the silver cross!"

However, each adversary took a third lance and made ready for the third course.

Thereupon, for the third time, the king cried—

"Laissez aller!"

The shock overturned the horse of the black cavalier, and Scianca-Ferro himself, losing both spurs, was compelled to grasp the saddle-bows; but, with admirable address, he seized his mace with one hand, and drew his sword with the other, so that a person might easily have fancied that the movement was caused only by his desire to substitute the weapon with which he wished to continue the combat for the weapon which had just been shivered.

On the other hand, as soon as the black cavalier touched ground, he made a bound to the side of his fallen steed; and with a dexterity equal to that of his adversary, he snatched his sword from the scabbard and his battle-axe from the saddle-bow where it was suspended.

Each of the combatants then took a step backward, in order to hang his axe from his belt; then when this weapon had been placed within reach of hand, as a last reserve, the two adversaries, leaving their squires to lead away the horses and pick up the lance-splinters, rushed on each other with as much rage and fury as if the combat had only just begun.

If the silence had been great, if the attention had been profound during the first three courses, the case was different when the lances were succeeded by the swords, for it was well known that no one excelled Emmanuel Philibert in handling the sword. No one, therefore, was astonished at the force and violence of the blows that began raining on

the black knight; but what really astonished the spectators was the wonderful address with which the latter parried them. However quick the attack, not less so was the defence, or rather it was not a case of attack on one side, and defence on the other; there was an equal exchange of strokes, and a terrible exchange it was. The two swords seemed two glaives of flame; no eye, however trained in this game of death, could follow them; only by the sparks that flashed from shield or casque or cuirass could it be known that they touched them.

At last Scianca-Ferro dealt such a blow on the head of his adversary that, finely tempered as the helmet was, it would have been cloven, if the black knight had not parried it with his shield; but the formidable blade cut the shield right through as if it had been leather, and even made a large gash in the armlet.

Embarrassed by a shield divided into two parts, the black knight took a step backward, flung it from him, and, taking his sword in both hands, he struck in turn such a furious blow on the shield of the duke, that the blade flew in twenty pieces, and only the hilt remained in his hand. Then a roar of joy might be heard from under the closed visor of Scianca-Ferro; the shorter and more massive the weapon, the greater, he felt, would be his vantage over the enemy. The black knight had thrown away the hilt of his sword, and seized his battle-axe; the squire of Emmanuel also threw his sword, and that trusty mace which had gained him the name of Scianca-Ferro was seen to whirl in his hand, gleaming like some golden lightning-flash.

From that moment there was only one cry of admiration in the lists, on the stands, and in the balconies. All comparison would fail to give an idea of the rapidity and violence of the blows. Neither having buckler, the question of address no longer existed for the two combatants; remained only that of strength. Struck as the anvil by the hammer, the black knight at first was motionless as the anvil, and almost as insensible; but stroke followed stroke

with such force that he began to recoil. Then his adversary recoiled also; the terrible mace turned in his hand like a sling, escaped with a hiss, and struck the black knight full on the visor. After this blow, the latter opened his arms, staggered for an instant, like a tree about to fall; but, even before he was on the ground, with a single bound, the bound of a tiger, Scianca-Ferro was upon him, his poniard ready to hand; the rattle of the two armors against each other was heard, then a cry from all the women, who repeated, "Mercy, Duke of Savoy! Duke Emmanuel, mercy!" But Scianca-Ferro replied, shaking his head, "No, no mercy for the traitor! no mercy for the assassin!" and, through the openings in visor, cuirass, and gorget, he sought a passage for his poniard, when suddenly the cries, "Stop! in the name of the living God, stop!" attracted all eyes toward a cavalier who was galloping into the lists, and who, leaping from his horse, threw his arms around the victor's waist, and, with superhuman strength lifting him up, threw him ten paces from the vanquished.

Then the cry of terror was succeeded by a cry of surprise; this cavalier riding at such headlong speed was Emmanuel Philibert, Duke of Savoy.

"Scianca-Ferro! Scianca-Ferro!" he cried, crimson with anger, "what have you done? You know well the life of this man is sacred to me, and that I do not wish him to die!"

"Sacred or not," replied Scianca-Ferro, "by the soul of my mother! I tell you he shall die only by my hand!"

"Fortunately," said Emmanuel, lifting the helmet from the head of the black knight, "it will not be this time at least!"

And, in fact, although his face was covered with blood, the vanquished combatant had only fainted; he had received no serious wound, and it was probable that the care of a doctor would soon restore him to life.

"Gentlemen," said Emmanuel Philibert to MM. de Vieilleville and de Boissy, "you are judges of the camp. I place

this man under the guardianship of your honor. As soon as he returns to consciousness, let him be free to withdraw, without telling his name or giving a cause for his hatred. It is my desire, it is my prayer, and, if necessary, I shall solicit this grace from the king, in order that it may also be his command."

The squires took the wounded man in their arms, and carried him away.

During this time, Scianca-Ferro unbuckled the clasp of his helmet, from which the crown and crest had disappeared, and flung it from him with indignation.

It was then only that the king made his appearance.

"Why, brother-in-law," said he, "it was not you?"

"No, sire," replied Emmanuel; "it was a man, as you see, who did honor to the armor he wore."

And he opened his arms to Scianca-Ferro, who, though growling like a bull-dog forced to let go his prey, and yet obedient to his master, embraced his foster-brother.

The applause that until now was restrained by terror or suspended by astonishment, burst forth from all quarters, and with an energy that shook the inclosure; the women waved their handkerchiefs, the princesses their scarfs, and Marguerite pointed to the fine battle-axe that was to be the prize of the conqueror.

But all this did not console Scianca-Ferro for the fact that for the second time the bastard of Waldeck escaped alive out of his hands.

So, while he was mounting the steps, conducted by the king and Emmanuel Philibert, to receive the battle-axe from the hands of Marguerite, he murmured:

"Only let the serpent, brother Emmanuel, fall a third time into my hands, and I swear to you he shall not escape!"

XIII

THE PREDICTION

ALL that had passed at the tournament on the 29th of June had remained a mystery not only for the mass of the spectators, but even for those whose close social relations with the duke might have been supposed to render them somewhat familiar with his secrets.

How was it that the Duke of Savoy, who ought to have been present, had been absent? How was it that his foster-brother, Scianca-Ferro, had put on his armor? And, above all, how did it come to pass that this other self, this friend, this foster-brother of Emmanuel, had to engage in such a fierce combat in his stead?

These were questions which every one put to his neighbor, but there was no answer; and when the king himself appeared anxious to be initiated into the mystery, Emmanuel begged him, with a smile, not to seek to lift the veil that covered this little corner of his life.

Madame Marguerite alone had a right to demand that he should satisfy that anxious curiosity which is always pardoned when based on real love; but she had been so confused by the late combat, was so happy at seeing her dear duke safe and sound, that she did not inquire further, and the only new sentiment that sprang up in her heart was a strong sisterly affection for Scianca-Ferro.

Thrice did Emmanuel make inquiries as to the condition of the wounded man.

The first time, the latter was unconscious; the second, he was restored to life; the third, he was on horseback.

The sole reply given by the bastard to this evidence of the anxious interest of the prince was in the form of a menace; he murmured—

"Tell Duke Emmanuel we shall meet again!"

Then this man, of whom nobody had any knowledge, departed with his squire, who was equally unknown.

It was clear he was ignorant of the fact that he had fought with Scianca-Ferro and not with the duke.

This spectacle, exciting enough, in all conscience, for its own sake, only gave new zest to the pleasures of the evening; but Henri said to the ladies, who were speaking of this event with their habitual enthusiasm—

"What can I offer you to-morrow, and what spectacle can be worthy of your beautiful eyes, after the one you have seen to-day?"

Poor king! he knew not that the spectacle of the morrow would be so terrible as to completely efface from the minds of historians even the recollection of that on the evening before.

For that matter, there was no want of omens.

About eight in the morning, one of the attendants of Catherine presented herself before Henri II., saying that she came in the name of the queen, humbly praying him to receive her Majesty.

"Receive her?" said the king. "I, on the contrary, will visit her, and that at once. Is she not my queen and my lady?"

Catherine shook her head when this reply was brought to her; she was, in fact, not much of a queen, and still less his lady.

His real queen and lady was the Duchesse de Valentinois.

The king, as soon as he entered, was frightened by the paleness of Catherine.

"Good God!" he exclaimed, "what is the matter with you? Are you ill, and have you passed a bad night?"

"Yes, my dear lord," replied Catherine, "I am ill, but I am also afraid!"

"But," returned the king, "in the name of Heaven, what can you be afraid of?"

"The event of yesterday has revived my old terrors. Do you remember, sire, the prediction made at your birth?"

"Ah, yes!" said Henri, "let me think. Was there not some talk of a horoscope of a threatening character?"

"You are right, sire."

"Something about dying in a duel, or in single combat?"

"Well, sire?"

"Well, you see the horoscope was in error; it was my brother-in-law Emmanuel, not I, who was threatened by this horoscope. But, thank Heaven, he has escaped! It is true I cannot tell in what manner, and that I do not understand how that squire of his—that demon, whom they may well call *Brise-Fer*—has happened to be at the point named, clad in his armor, and running that terrible course in his stead against the black knight."

"Monseigneur," replied Catherine, "it was not your brother-in-law Emmanuel who was menaced, it was you. To him the stars promise a long and happy destiny, while to you—"

Catherine paused, trembling.

"Dear lady," returned Henri, "I have little belief in predictions or horoscopes or nativities; but I have always heard that, from the time when some such prediction was made to Œdipus, a monarch of ancient times, up to the one made to good King Louis XII. on the day of his marriage with Madame Anne of Bretagne, all precautions taken against their fulfilment have been useless, and that what must be, must be. Let us trust, then, to the goodness of God and to the intercession of our guardian angel, and let things take their course."

"Sire," said Catherine, "would it not be all the same to you not to enter the lists to-day?"

"What, madame!" exclaimed Henri, "not enter to-day? But are you unaware that I have decided to joust to-day with my three companions, M. de Guise, M. de Nemours,

and M. de Ferrara? It was an ingenious method I adopted of not having to abandon the lists, and, as this is the last tournament we shall have, of enjoying it to the full."

"Sire," said Catherine, "you are the master; but to go against the warnings of the stars is to tempt God, for the stars are the heavenly alphabet."

"Madame," replied Henri, "I am grateful in the highest degree for your anxiety; but except there be positive warning of a very real danger, I cannot change the programme of the day."

"Sire," said Catherine, "unfortunately there is nothing positive except my fears, nothing real except my anxiety; and I would give much if any one whose influence with you is greater than mine should ask you to grant the favor you have just refused me."

"No one has more influence with me than you, madame," answered Henri, with dignity; "and you may well believe this—that what I refuse to the mother of my children, I would never grant to any one."

Then gallantly kissing her hand—a hand, moreover, the most beautiful in the world—

"And now, madame," he added, "do not forget, I pray you, that you are to-day the queen of the tournament, and that I am going to do my best to be crowned by your hand."

Catherine sighed; then as if, having accomplished her duty, she left all the rest to God—

"It is well, sire," she said; "let us say no more about it. It may be, after all, that it is another prince whose days are menaced; but, in truth, I should have less fear of a real duel than of this semblance of a combat, for the prediction is positive, and it is in a tournament or jousting that the danger lies: *Quem Mars non rapuit, Martis imago rapit!* He whom Mars hath spared, the image of Mars seizeth!"

But Henri was too far away to hear the text of the prediction which Catherine murmured in a faint voice.

Whether through preoccupation or some other motive,

Catherine was not present at the dinner; but she was one of the first to take her seat in the royal balcony.

It was afterward remarked that she was clad in a robe of violet velvet, slashed with white satin, the mourning of courts.

When the time came for arming, the king summoned M. de Vieilleville, the grand chamberlain, to render him this service.

Strange to say, the grand equerry, M. de Boissy, was not at his post.

It was M. de Vieilleville who announced to the king the absence of M. de Boissy.

"Well, since you are there, Vieilleville," said the king, "there is no harm done; you may arm me."

M. de Vieilleville obeyed; but at the moment of placing the casque on the head of the king, his courage seemed to fail him, and, heaving a profound sigh, he said, at the same time placing the casque on the table instead of on the king's head—

"God is my witness, sire, that never did I accomplish a task more against my heart than this one."

"And why so, my old friend?" asked Henri.

"Because," replied M. de Vieilleville, "for more than three nights I have done nothing but dream that some misfortune was sure to happen to you to-day, and that this latter end of June will be fatal to you."

"Tush!" said the king, "I know the story, and I know from what direction the wind blows."

"I do not understand you, sire."

"I say that you have seen Queen Catherine this morning."

"Sire, I had the honor of seeing the queen, not this morning, but yesterday."

"And she has spoken to you of her visions, has she not?"

"Sire, Queen Catherine did me the honor of speaking to me three days ago, and what she said had no reference to

the fear which I have just mentioned to your Majesty. For that matter," continued the grand chamberlain, who seemed a little hurt at the notion that the king should consider him the mouthpiece of another person, "the king is the master, and will do as it pleases him."

"Come now," retorted the king, "shall I tell you why you are alarmed? It is because you are marshal only on my word, and the patent is not yet signed. But do not be uneasy, Vieilleville, unless I be killed on the spot, you shall have your patent; if I cannot sign my name in full, I will sign my initials, which amounts to the same."

"Since your Majesty takes it so," replied Vieilleville, "I have no longer anything to say, except to ask your pardon for what I have said. However, if any misfortune happened to the king, you may be assured that it would not be my patent I should regret, but the misfortune."

And he placed the casque on the king's head.

At this moment entered Admiral de Coligny. He was armed, saved the helmet, which a page held behind him.

"Deign to excuse me, sire," said he; "but I fear there has been some change made in the programme for the last day. There is talk of the jousting ending with a *mêlée*. I should like to know if there is any truth in this; for, in such a case, I would have some words of importance to address to your Majesty on this subject."

"No," replied the king; "but tell me, my dear admiral, what you would have to say if there was to be a *mêlée*."

"Sire," replied Coligny, "pardon a question which I swear to you is not dictated by mere curiosity. Against whom does the king count on running?"

"Oh, my dear admiral, that is no secret, and you must be deeply engrossed with theological questions to be ignorant of it! I run against M. de Guise first, then against M. de Nemours, then, in fine, against the Duke of Ferrara."

"And your Majesty will make no other course?"

"No, not as I think at present, at least."

The admiral bowed.

"Then," said he, "your Majesty will permit me to express my pleasure and happiness at what I have just learned; it was all I desired to know."

"Well, my dear admiral," said the king, laughing, "your pleasure and happiness are easily satisfied!"

Then, addressing Vieilleville—

"Come, come, Vieilleville," he said, "order the trumpets to be sounded; we are late, I fear."

The trumpets sounded, and the joust began.

As the king had stated, the first course was between him and Guise; it was superb. The two jousters displayed all their skill; however, at the third encounter, the assault of the king was so violent that the Duc de Guise lost both spurs, and, to avoid falling, was compelled to grasp the pommel.

The honor was with the king, although several claimed that the fault was not M. de Guise's, but his horse's, which was restive.

The three courses finished, came the turn of Jacques de Savoie. The king had a new girth put on his steed, and he himself selected his lance with the greatest care.

We have already mentioned the reputation of M. de Nemours for skill and strength in this warlike sport.

He sustained his reputation, but the king lost nothing of his.

At the third encounter, the horse of Nemours fell, and as horse and rider in front of him remained on their legs, the king was declared victor by the judges of the camp.

At last, the trumpets gave the signal for the final passage at arms. It was, as we have said, between the king and the Duke of Ferrara.

Although an expert at this sort of game, Alfonzo of Este, who was afterward to ruin his duchy with tournaments and all kinds of festivities, was not an adversary capable of giving much trouble to Henri II.

Queen Catherine, who was following the jousts with real anxiety, began, therefore, to recover her serenity somewhat.

The stars had told her that, the 30th of June once passed, she need have no cause to fear on account of her husband, and that, if this last day went by without accident, Henri would reign long and happily over France.

The trumpets sounded; the king and the Duke of Ferrara completed their three courses. In the last, the Duke of Ferrara lost both the stirrups, while the king remained firm in the saddle.

The king, therefore, was the victor.

But he was not satisfied. It was not yet four in the afternoon; the applause intoxicated him, and he was loth to quit the lists.

"Ah, *mordieu!*" he said, as the judges of the camp declared that all was finished, "it would be to be a victor at very small cost!"

And, perceiving Montgomery, who was standing in the bastion of the assailants, completely armed, except the headpiece—

"Ah, Montgomery!" he cried, "M. de Guise told me that you were very near unhorsing him the other day, and that he had never encountered better jouster than you. Come, while I am recruiting myself with a glass of wine, put on your helmet at once, and we shall break a lance to the glory of our ladies."

"Sire," said Montgomery, "I should feel great pleasure in accepting the honor which your Majesty deigns to grant me, but there are no more lances here, the call for them has been so great."

"If there are none near you, Montgomery," said the king, "there are some near me, and I shall send you three to choose from."

And, turning to his squire—

"Ho, France!" he said, "three of your best lances for M. de Montgomery."

Then he descended from his horse, re-entered his bastion, had himself unhelmed, and asked for wine.

At this moment, as he was holding the goblet in his hand, the Duke of Savoy entered.

"A goblet for M. de Savoie," said he; "I wish him to drink to the health of Madame Marguerite, while I drink to the health of my lady."

"Sire," said Emmanuel, "nothing could delight me more; but let me first fulfil my commission."

"Speak," said the king, all on fire with pleasure; "I am listening."

"I come in the name of Queen Catherine, sire, to beg you not to run again. Everything has ended happily; she ardently desires that your Majesty should be content to let matters rest now."

"Tush!" said the king, "have you not heard that I have challenged M. de Montgomery, and have sent him lances to choose from? Tell the queen that I run this time for love of her, and, when this course is finished, all will be over."

"Sire," insisted the duke.

"A goblet! a goblet for M. de Savoie! and, in return for the health he is about to drink to my sister, I will restore him the marquisate of Saluces. But, in God's name, do not hinder me from breaking this last lance!"

"You will not break it, however, sire!" said a voice behind him.

The king turned his head and recognized the constable.

"Ah, it is you, my old bear! What are you doing here, except you want to drink? Your place is in the lists."

"The king is mistaken," said Montmorency; "my place was in the lists as long as the lists were open; but the lists are closed—I am no longer judge of the camp."

"Closed?" said the king. "Not yet! I have still a lance to break."

"Sire, Queen Catherine—"

"Ah, you come also on her part!"

"Sire, she entreats you—"

"A goblet! a goblet for the constable!" interrupted the king.

The constable took the goblet, grumbling—

"Sire," said he, "after the peace I negotiated lately, I fancied I was an ambassador of some merit; but your Majesty convinces me I have had too good an opinion of myself, and ought to go back to school again."

"Come, duke!" said the king; "come, constable! we must each of us drink to his lady; you, brother-in-law, to Marguerite, the pearl of pearls; you, constable, to Madame de Valentinois, the fairest of the fair; and I to Queen Catherine. You must both tell her that I have emptied this goblet to her health, and that I run this last lance in her honor."

There was no use struggling with such obstinacy. The two envoys bowed and left.

"Ho, Vieilleville!" cried Henri, "my casque!"

But, instead of Vieilleville, it was Coligny who entered.

"Sire," said Coligny, "it is I again. Will your Majesty pardon me?"

"You are fully pardoned, admiral; and, since you are here, will you buckle my helmet?"

"Sire, first a word—"

"Not now, if you please, my dear admiral—afterward."

"Afterward, sire, would be too late for what I have to say to you."

"Then say it as quickly as possible."

"Sire, you will not run against M. de Montgomery."

"Ah, you too!" cried the king. "I thought Huguenots boasted of not being superstitious; such things are good enough for the queen, who is a Catholic, and a Florentine in addition."

"Sire, listen to me," replied Coligny, gravely. "What I have to tell you is the more serious that the warning comes to you from a great Emperor who is now dead."

"Ah, ah! it is a warning from the Emperor Charles V., which you forgot to give me on your arrival from Brussels, is it not?"

"The king is mistaken; I gave that warning, but indi-

rectly, when I prevailed on your Majesty to send Montgomery to Scotland."

"Ah, it is true, the advice came from you! Well, he has been there, and served me well."

"I know it, sire. But perhaps you are not aware why I advised you to send M. de Montgomery into Scotland?"

"In fact, I am not at all aware."

"Well, it was because the Emperor Charles was informed by his astrologer that M. de Montgomery had between his two eyebrows a mark which showed he would, some day or other, be fatal to a prince of the *fleur-de-lis.*"

"Pshaw!"

"The august Emperor charged me to warn your Majesty of this horoscope; but, as I knew M. de Montgomery to be one of your most devoted servants; as I was sure if he became fatal to a prince of the *fleur-de-lis*, he would become so involuntarily; and as I was afraid I might affect him injuriously in your Majesty's opinion, if I divulged this prediction—I contented myself with advising you to send the captain of your Scotch Guard to Scotland with aid for the regent. Again, when I heard there was going to be a *mêlée* to-day, I came to inquire of your Majesty if it was true, in order—in such a case—to keep M. de Montgomery out of it, or to see, as I did the last time, that he did not encounter your Majesty. There was no *mêlée*; consequently, I had nothing to do or say in connection with it. But now that, by a kind of fatality, when the jousts are ended, the king has challenged M. de Montgomery, I appeal to the king, and, in the hope of arresting this joust, I tell you, sire, what the Emperor himself told me in relation to Comte de Lorges. Sire, in the name of Heaven, do not run against M. de Montgomery! M. de Montgomery will be fatal to a prince of the *fleur-de-lis*, and of all the princes of the *fleur-de-lis*, the King of France is the greatest."

Henri was for a moment pensive; then, laying his hand on the shoulder of Coligny—

"Admiral," he replied, "if you had told me this morn-

ing what you have told me now, it is probable I should not have challenged Montgomery; but now that the challenge has been delivered, it is too late—it would look as if I drew back through fear. Now, God is my witness, I fear nothing in the world. I am not the less thankful to you, M. l'Amiral; but let misfortune happen to me or not, it is too late—I must break this lance."

"Sire," said a squire, entering at this moment, "M. de Montgomery is armed, and awaits the good pleasure of the king."

"It is well, my friend; the good pleasure of the king is that you buckle my helmet, and that the trumpet sound."

The half only of the king's order was fulfilled. The squire buckled the helmet: but the musicians, believing that the tournament was over, had left the balcony which served them as a stand.

When this untoward circumstance was told the king, and also that they were near enough to be recalled, but that it would take half an hour, he exclaimed—

"Tush! it would take too long. We shall run without flourishes—what does it matter?"

Then he mounted his horse, and issued from the bastion, crying—

"Ho! M. de Montgomery, are you ready?"

"Yes, sire," replied the count, issuing in his turn from the opposite bastion.

"Messieurs," said the king to the judges of the camp, "you see that we only await your permission."

"Laissez aller!" said the Duke of Savoy and the constable.

And amid the deepest and most lugubrious silence the two jousters rushed forth and met in the centre of the lists, both breaking their lances.

Suddenly, to the great astonishment of the spectators, the feet of the king were seen to lose hold of the stirrups, and his arms, dropping the rein, to cling round the neck of his horse, which completed its course, while Montgomery,

as if petrified with terror, threw away the fragment of the lance which had remained in his hand.

At the same time, MM. de Vieilleville and de Boissy, suspecting from the attitude of the king that something extraordinary had occurred, leaped over the barrier and seized the horse's bit, crying—

"For the love of God, what is the matter, sire?"

"You were quite right, my dear Vieilleville," stammered the king, "in opposing this accursed course."

"Are you hurt then, sire?" asked the grand chamberlain, anxiously.

"I believe I am dead," murmured the king, in a voice so feeble that those who supported him could scarcely hear him.

In fact, the fragment of Montgomery's lance, slipping along the armor of the king, had raised the visor, and a splinter had penetrated the eye and touched the brain.

Then collecting all his strength in one last cry—

"Let not M. de Montgomery be troubled," he said; "it was not his fault."

A confused, terrified clamor arose from the ranks of the spectators, and all scattered in tumultuous disorder, as if the thunderbolt had fallen in their midst, each flying in his own direction, and crying on his road—

"The king is dead! The king is dead!"

XIV

THE BED OF DEATH

MEANWHILE, MM. de Boissy and de Vieilleville had borne the king into his chamber, and laid him, armed as he was, on the bed.

They could not take off his helmet, as the splinter was sunk in the wound two or three inches deep.

The surgeons present at the tournament ran up.

There were five of them; but none dared take on himself the responsibility of drawing the splinter from the wound, and although Queen Catherine, the dauphin, and princesses —who alone were admitted into the chamber—entreated them to do something for the relief of the wounded king, they looked at one another, shaking their heads, saying—

"Send for Maitre Ambroise Paré as quickly as possible; for without him we cannot undertake anything."

"Let Maitre Ambroise Paré be found, wherever he is!" said the queen.

And on the very instant servants, pages, and equerries darted in all directions, inquiring in every quarter where it was possible to get tidings of the illustrious surgeon.

In fact, Ambroise Paré was, at this period, at the apogee of his reputation. After following René de Montejean, colonel of infantry, into Italy, he returned to France, took his degrees in the college of Saint-Edme, was named provost of the corporation of surgeons, and for seven years had been attached to the person of the king as surgeon-in-chief.

He was discovered in the garret of a poor tiler, who had fallen from a roof and broken his leg.

A cry of "Here is Maitre Ambroise Paré! here he is!" announced his arrival.

Then appeared on the threshold of the door a man of from forty-five to forty-six years, with a grave demeanor, a prominent forehead, and thoughtful, meditative eyes.

Each, on perceiving him, drew back to open a path to the bedside of the patient.

"Look, master," said the physicians.

And all eyes were riveted on him who was regarded as the only man in France capable of saving the life of the king, if the life of the king could be saved.

We say *in France*, for there was outside of France a man whose reputation was superior to that of Ambroise Paré, and whom the latter was well pleased to call his master.

This man was André Vesale, the surgeon of Philip II.

All those eyes, riveted on Ambroise Paré, were asking more eloquently than words what was to be hoped or what was to be feared.

It was impossible to read anything on the face of the illustrious practitioner; it could only be noticed that at sight of the wound his countenance grew slightly pale.

"Oh, Maitre Ambroise," cried Catherine de Médicis, "do not forget it is the King of France I intrust to your hands!"

Ambroise Paré had already stretched out his arm toward Henri II.; he let it fall back again by his side.

"Madame," said he, "in the state in which your august spouse is at present, the real King of France is not he, but his successor. I ask leave to treat him as I would the lowest soldier in the army; it is the only chance I have of saving him."

"There is, then, a chance, Maitre Ambroise?" inquired the queen.

"I do not say so, madame."

"Do your best, maitre!" replied Catherine. "We know you are the most skilful man in the kingdom."

Ambroise did not reply to the compliment; but, sup-

porting his left hand against the upper part of the helmet, he seized with the right hand the splinter, and, with a movement as sure as if it had been operated, as he said, on the lowest soldier of the army, he drew it from the wound.

Henri shivered through his whole body, and heaved a sigh.

"Now," said Ambroise, "take off the king's casque and armor, and do so as gently as possible."

M. de Vieilleville laid his hand on the casque; but he trembled to such a degree that the surgeon stopped him.

"Let me do it," said Paré. "I am the only one whose hand has not the right to tremble."

And, laying the head of the king on his left arm, he unbuckled the helmet slowly but surely, without any shock. The helmet taken off, there was less difficulty about the rest of the armor.

The entire body was stripped without the wounded man making the slightest movement; there was for the time complete paralysis.

When the king was placed in a restful position, Ambroise Paré proceeded to the consideration of the wound.

An examination of the splinter, which he had laid with the greatest care on a table near the royal bed, indicated to him that the foreign body had entered the head for a length of very nearly three inches, and the detritus around the wood that it had penetrated as far as the membranes of the brain.

Ambroise delicately raised the lips of the wound with a spatula, and, with the help of a silver stylet, sounded it.

As might be judged by the fragment he had withdrawn from it, this wound was horrible!

He then applied to it the powdered charcoal, which at that period was used instead of lint; next, he applied to the eye a compress of ice-water, which was to be renewed every quarter of an hour.

At the contact of the water the figure of the wounded

man contracted—a proof that all sensibility was not yet extinct in him.

The surgeon appeared to experience a certain satisfaction at sight of this nervous contraction; then, turning to the royal family, all in tears, and addressing the queen—

"Madame," said he, "I cannot, for the present, judge what may be the issue; but I can tell your Majesty that there is no immediate danger of death. Consequently I would advise you to retire and take some repose, and give a moment's rest to your grief. As for me, I shall not quit the bedside of the king until he is cured or dead."

Catherine approached the sufferer, bent over him, and kissed his hand; but, while kissing his hand, she drew from his finger the famous ring which Madame de Nemours had once taken from him, and to which, it was said, was attached the mystery of that long love of Henri for Diane.

As if he had felt that some deep-rooted sentiment was being violently plucked from his heart, the wounded monarch started, just as he did when the splinter was torn out of his wound.

Ambroise Paré advanced quickly. "Pardon, madame," said he, "but what have you done to the king?"

"Nothing," said she; "only perhaps the king, from the depths of his unconsciousness, has recognized me."

The dauphin, princes, and princesses followed Catherine in due order.

Outside the king's chamber, Catherine met M. de Vieilleville, who had just changed his linen, having been all covered with the blood of the king.

"M. de Vieilleville," asked the queen, "where are you going?"

"I am grand chamberlain, your Majesty," he answered, "and my duty is not to quit the king's side for an hour."

"Your duty is in harmony with my wishes, M. de Vieilleville. You know that I have always held you for my good friend?"

M. de Vieilleville bowed. Although, at this period, Catherine did not treat her *good friends* so badly as she did afterward, it was not without a certain anxiety that the man to whom she gave this title received the favor.

"Madame," said he, "I very humbly thank your Majesty for the esteem in which you hold me, and I shall do my best to endeavor to prove myself not unworthy of it."

"You will have only one thing to do, M. le Comte, and it is a very easy thing: you will have to prevent Madame de Valentinois and every one belonging to the constable's party from coming near the king."

"However, madame," said Vieilleville, considerably embarrassed by the commission, which consolidated his favor, it is true, if the king died, but would make his position very doubtful if the king recovered, "if Madame de Valentinois should insist on entering?"

"You will tell her, my dear count, that, as long as the king is unconscious, it is Queen Catherine de Médicis that reigns, and that Queen Catherine de Médicis does not wish the courtesan Diane de Poitiers to enter the chamber of her dying husband!"

"But, then," returned Vieilleville, scratching his ear in his perplexity, "there is a story about a certain ring—"

"You are mistaken, M. de Vieilleville; this ring exists no longer. We have drawn it from the finger of our well-beloved lord, in order that—if his Majesty passed from life to death, which Heaven forfend!—we might use it to seal your patent as Marshal of France, which, as you are aware, is not yet signed."

"Madame," said Vieilleville, reassured by the sight of the ring as much as by the words of Catherine, "you are the queen, as you have said, and as such your orders shall be executed."

"Ah! I well knew, my dear Vieilleville," said Catherine, "that you were my friend!"

And she left him, carrying with her in her heart, in all probability, a fine contempt for the human species.

The king remained four days perfectly motionless: during these four days Madame de Valentinois presented herself several times; but the door was obstinately shut against her.

Some of her friends advised her to quit the palace of Les Tournelles and await events in her apartments at the Louvre, and even at her chateau of Anet, showing her that, if she was obstinate in remaining, some misfortune might befall her.

But her constant answer was that her place was where the king was, and that as long as he preserved a breath of life she was tranquil: her most furious enemies would not dare to attempt anything against either her life or liberty.

On the eve of the third day—that is to say, about seventy-two hours after the event—a man, covered with dust, descended from a horse covered with sweat and foam, at the door of the palace of Les Tournelles, saying that he came from King Philip, and demanded to see King Henri if he was still alive.

Every one knew what orders had been given, and how carefully the entrance to the king's chamber had been guarded.

"What name shall I give to her Majesty the Queen?" asked the usher on duty, who was answerable for each person who opened the door to M. de Vieilleville.

"It is rather to my learned *confrère*, Ambroise Paré, you should tell my name than to the queen," replied the unknown. "I am called André Vesale."

The usher entered the chamber of the king, who was always in a faint, and apparently utterly unconscious; then, approaching Ambroise Paré, who, with a head freshly cut in his hand, was seeking in the interior of the brain for the mysteries of human life and human intelligence, which are still unknown, he repeated the name he had just heard.

Ambroise Paré made him repeat it a second time,

and, sure now that he had heard aright, uttered a cry of joy.

"Ah! messieurs, good news! If the king can be saved by human science, one man alone can perform this miracle. Messieurs, thank God, that man is here!" And opening the door abruptly—

"Enter, enter," said he, "you who are now the true and only king here!"

Then to M. de Vieilleville—

"M. le Comte," said he, "be good enough to inform the queen that the illustrious André Vesale is beside her august spouse."

M. de Vieilleville, happy at being the messenger of seemingly good news to the queen, darted out of the apartment, on the threshold of which appeared a man of about forty-six years, of middle height, with keen and intelligent eyes, brown complexion, and curly hair and beard.

This man was, in fact, André Vesale, whom King Philip II., having learned through a courier sent by the Duke of Savoy of the accident to his father-in-law, had sent in all haste to the relief of the sufferer.

The courier had come up with King Philip at Cambrai; and as André Vesale, his physician, was near him at the moment, the illustrious anatomist was able, at the end of the third day, to find himself by the bedside of the sufferer.

The immense reputation enjoyed by André Vesale at that period is well known; there is no need to be surprised, therefore, at the manner in which he had just been received by a man so conscientious and modest as Ambroise Paré—a man very superior to Vesale in manual dexterity, much more adroit in extracting a ball or cutting off a limb, but very inferior to the latter in theoretic knowledge, and especially in all matters relating to anatomical science.

Anatomy, indeed, had been the passionate life-study of the Brabant doctor. At a time when the religious principle made the dead body sacred, and was opposed to searching

for the secrets of life in death, he exposed himself to the hatred of fanatics, in order to enable science, stumbling in the darkness of ignorance, to make a few steps more.

Vesale first studied at Montpellier. Ever since 1376 the doctors of this school had the right, in virtue of a permission obtained from Louis of Anjou, to take each year the dead body of a criminal who had been executed, for the purpose of dissection. This permission was continued by Charles the Bad, King of Navarre, and by Charles VI., King of France.

Vesale studied there in 1532; he was then eighteen years old; afterward he came to Paris.

There, his daring in braving the dangers involved in the trade he adopted of snatching corpses from the cemeteries gained him a reputation. Every night, in graveyards or under gibbets, he might be seen disputing with the dogs and ravens dead bodies often in a state of putrefaction.

After three years spent in these dismal toils, Vesale obtained a professor's chair at Louvain, and was allowed to make anatomical demonstrations which the possession of a skeleton enabled him to render effective.

This skeleton aroused the susceptibility of the magistrates.

Vesale, summoned before them, was questioned as to the manner in which the skeleton fell into his hands.

"I brought it from Paris," said Vesale.

The illustrious anatomist lied; but he did not regard a falsehood which accrued to the salvation of humanity as a sin.

How had Vesale procured this skeleton? We are about to see.

One day, in company with a friend named Gemma, he was crossing the field devoted to the execution of criminals about a quarter of a league from Louvain. He happened to perceive a dead body, which the beaks of the birds of prey had almost reduced to the condition of a skeleton. The bones, glistening in their whiteness, attracted the eye

of sublime sacrilege, and he resolved to appropriate this human carcass. The lower extremities were detached easily enough; but, for fear that the vertebræ of the neck, broken by the weight of the executioner—who, as we know, used to glide over the gibbet on to the shoulders of the criminal—could no longer support the body, a chain had been passed round the trunk, and fastened to the gibbet.

It was necessary to defer the rest of the robbery until night. The bones of the legs and thighs were carried off and hidden; then came the hour when owls and sorcerers are thought to be the only wanderers over these plains of desolation. Vesale returned, without his friend, who no longer dared to accompany him, and, aided by his hands only, he detached the skeleton from its chain.

In three nights the parts of what had been a man, living, thinking, loving, suffering, like him who was now appropriating his remains, were borne into the city. Three more nights sufficed to clean and fix them in proper order on wires.

And now you know how André Vesale procured that skeleton which scandalized the magistrates of Louvain, and which he affirmed he had brought from Paris.

Then occurred the war of Italy between Charles V. and François I. Vesale followed the Spanish armies, as Ambroise Paré did the French armies. Twice only, once at Montpellier and once at Paris, had he had an opportunity of being present at the opening of human corpses not yet putrefied; and it was with a kind of frenzy that, having more freedom on battlefields than elsewhere, he devoted himself, though always in a clandestine manner, to those anatomical studies that have been immortalized by the pencil of Rembrandt.

It was then after several autopsies, made in public or in his cabinet, that he ventured on reforming Galen, who, having dissected only the bodies of animals, swarmed with errors.

He did more: he published and presented to the Prince

Don Philip a "Manual of Anatomy," which was but the prospectus of the great work he promised to publish later on.

But from that moment the professors, his rivals, and consequently his enemies, found a surface whereat to bite, attacked the book as sacrilegious, and raised such a clamor from Venice to Toledo that Charles V. himself was frightened by such a hubbub, and delivered up the work to the theologians of the University of Salamanca, in order that they might decide if it was lawful to open dead bodies.

Fortunately, the monks replied by a decree more enlightened than those usually emanating from religious orders:

"It is useful, consequently, permitted."

Thereupon, the facts averred being insufficient for the condemnation of Vesale, recourse was had to calumny.

The rumor ran that Vesale, being in too great a hurry to study the disease of which a Spanish gentleman died, had opened his body before he breathed the last sigh.

The heirs of the dead man, it was said, had forced the door of the bedchamber where Vesale had shut himself up with his victim, and were just in time to prove that the heart, which had been laid bare, still pulsated.

It is true no one named the gentleman; it is true the heirs, who had an interest in prosecuting the affair, did not make their appearance; but, from the very fact that the accusation was unsustained by proofs, it was received without discussion, and among the enemies of Vesale it was a certainty that he had opened a living man.

This time the outcry was such that it needed nothing less than the stubbornness—the term is not exaggerated—of Philip II. to save Vesale, not from a public trial, but from some ambuscade in which he would have fallen a victim to the popular fury, which pointed the finger at him as an accursed and sacrilegious wretch.

Alas! Philip grew weary, later on, of supporting this martyr of genius. Obliged to quit France, Italy, and

Spain, Vesale made a pilgrimage to the tomb of Jesus Christ, and, shipwrecked on his return from the holy places on the island of Zante, he died of misery and hunger!

But at the time we meet him the powerful arm that supported him was not yet weary; and the King of Spain, convinced of the genius of his doctor, sent him, as we have said, to his father-in-law, Henri II.

XV

FLORENTINE POLICY

ANDRE VESALE approached the patient, examined him, received from Ambroise Paré an account of the treatment which had been followed, approved of it in all respects, and then asked to see the splinter drawn from the eye of the king by the able surgeon.

Ambroise Paré had, by means of a line on the splinter, indicated how far it had penetrated.

Vesale asked in what way it had penetrated—horizontally, diagonally, or obliquely.

Ambroise Paré replied that it was obliquely; and, taking the head which he was studying, he thrust the splinter into the eye, up to the spot where it had penetrated in the eye of the king, giving it the exact direction it had before being drawn from the wound.

"Now," said Ambroise Paré, "here is the head. I was just making an opening in it to observe again the sort of damage that would be done by such a stroke in the interior of the brain."

Four men condemned to death had already been decapitated, in order that the surgeons might make the same experiment which Ambroise Paré now proposed renewing in the company of Vesale.

But Vesale, interrupting his *confrère*, said—

"It is useless: I see by the length of the splinter, and by the direction it has taken, the kind of damage it must have done. There has been a fracture of the right superciliary arch, and of the superior coat of the orbit; penetra-

tion with fracture of the bones, and laceration of the envelopes of the dura mater, pia mater, and arachnoid, and of the inferior part of the right anterior lobe of the brain; prolongation of the penetration into the superior part of the same lobe—hence inflammation, then congestion, with extravasation, in all likelihood, in the two anterior lobes."

"It is that exactly!" cried Ambroise Paré, amazed; "the very thing I verified on the heads of the criminals decapitated!"

"Yes," said Vesale, smiling, "less the extravasation, which could not happen, the wound having been made on a dead body."

"Well," asked Paré, "what do you think of the wound?"

"I am certain it is mortal," said Vesale.

A feeble cry was heard behind the anatomist.

Catherine de Médicis, introduced by Comte de Vieilleville, had entered the chamber during the anatomical definition given by Vesale to his *confrère*, and heard the opinion expressed by the former; hence the cry which had attracted the attention of the two surgeons, who, absorbed in this scientific discussion, had neither noticed the presence of the queen.

"Mortal!" murmured Catherine. "You say, monsieur, that the wound is mortal?"

"I believe it is my duty, madame," replied Vesale, "to repeat to your Majesty what I have said to my learned *confrère*, Ambroise Paré. The death of a king is not an ordinary event, and those who inherit an empire need to be warned of the precise hour at which this empire passes from the hands of the dead into those of the living. However painful the intelligence, I must repeat, madame, that the wound of the king is essentially mortal."

The queen passed a handkerchief over her forehead, which was covered with perspiration.

"But," she asked, "is he likely to die without having recovered consciousness?"

Vesale approached the wounded man, took his wrist, and counted the pulsations.

Then, at the end of a moment—

"Ninety pulsations," he said to Ambroise Paré.

"In that case, the fever has diminished," replied the latter; "the pulse, in the course of the first two days, had reached a hundred and ten."

"Madame," said Vesale, "if the pulse continues to retrograde in this proportion, and if there is a passing resorption of the extravasation, it is probable that before dying the king may speak once or twice."

"And when?" asked Catherine, anxiously.

"Ah, madame," said Vesale, "you ask of human science more than it knows! However, if we substitute probabilities for certainties, I think the king may recover consciousness about the middle of to-morrow."

"Vieilleville," said the queen, "you hear. The very moment the king returns to life let me know. I must be there, and no other, to hear what the king may be able to say."

About two in the afternoon of the next day the pulse fell to seventy-two, the patient made a slight movement, and sighed feebly.

"M. de Vieilleville," said Vesale, "warn her Majesty the queen-mother; in all probability the king will recover consciousness, and utter a few words."

The grand chamberlain hurried out of the apartment; and when he returned, five minutes after, with the queen, Henri had begun to recover his senses, and was murmuring these words, scarcely intelligible—

"The queen! Some one fetch the queen!"

"I am here, monseigneur!" cried Catherine, falling on her knees before the bed of Henri II.

Ambroise Paré was regarding, with astonishment, this man, who, if he did not command life and death, appeared, at least, to be initiated into all their secrets.

"Madame," asked Vesale, "does your Majesty wish that M. Paré and I remain in this room, or that we leave?"

The queen questioned the king with her eyes.

"Let them remain," murmured Henri. "Besides, I am so weak that I fear I may faint at any moment."

Then Vesale made a sign, drew from his pocket a little flask containing a liquor as red as blood, poured a few drops into a silver-gilt spoon, and introduced this liquor between the lips of the king.

Henri breathed a sigh of happiness, and a slight shade of vitality appeared on his cheeks.

"Ah!" said he, "I feel better!"

Then, glancing round—

"Ah! it is you, Vieilleville," said he; "you have not left me?"

"No, sire," replied the count, sobbing; "not for a single minute!"

"You said it to me—you said it to me!" murmured Henri; "but I did not wish to believe you—I was wrong. Nor would I listen to you either, madame. Do not forget that M. de Coligny is one of my true friends, for he has said more to me than any of you: he named Montgomery as the man fated to kill me."

"He named Montgomery!" cried Catherine. "And how did he know?"

"Ah! by a prophecy made to Charles V. By the way, I hope M. de Montgomery is free?"

Catherine did not answer.

"I hope he is!" returned Henri. "I demand, and, if need be, order that no harm be done to him!"

"Yes, sire," replied Vieilleville, "M. de Montgomery is free; every hour of the day and night he sends to inquire after your Majesty. He is in despair!"

"Let him console himself. Poor De Lorges! he has always faithfully served me, and especially lately, with the Queen-Regent of Scotland."

"Alas!" murmured Catherine, "why did he not stay with her?"

"Madame, it was not his own wish, but an order from

the king that brought him back from Scotland. He refused to tilt against the king; it was an order from me that forced him to do so. My ill fortune has been the cause of everything, not he; let us not, then, rebel against God, but rather profit by the few moments He miraculously leaves us to regulate our most pressing affairs."

"Oh, monseigneur!" murmured Catherine.

"And first," returned Henri, "let us think of the promises made to our friends; then we shall occupy ourselves with the treaties made with our enemies. You know what has been promised to Vieilleville?"

"Yes, sire."

"His patent as Marshal of France was about to be signed when this terrible accident happened; it ought to be ready."

"Yes, sire," replied Vieilleville. "Your Majesty had the goodness to take it in blank to the chancellor, in order to have him sign it on the first opportunity—and here it is. I had it on me during that fatal 30th of June, and, as since that day I have not undressed nor left the king, it is on me still."

Saying these words, Vieilleville presented the patent to Henri.

"I cannot stir without great pain, madame," said the wounded man to Catherine; "have the goodness to sign the patent for me, dating it from to-day, and inscribing the reason why you sign it in my place, and then give it to my old friend."

Comte de Vieilleville, sobbing, threw himself on his knees, kissing the king's hand, which was as white as the sheet on which it rested.

During this time Catherine was writing at the bottom of the patent of Marshal of France:

"For the king, wounded, by his order, and near his bed.

"CATHERINE, *Queen.*

"July 4, 1559."

She read and showed the king what she had just written.

"Is that correct, sire?" she asked.

"Yes, madame," said Henri; "and now give the patent to Vieilleville."

Catherine did so; then, in a whisper—

"You have the patent," said she; "but do not keep your promise the less on account of that, my good friend, for it might be possible to withdraw it."

"Be tranquil, madame," he returned; "I have given my word, and I do not withdraw that." And, folding his patent carefully, he put it in his pocket.

"And now," said the king, "are the Duke of Savoy and my sister married?"

"No, sire," replied Catherine; "the moment would have been badly chosen for a wedding."

"On the contrary—on the contrary," replied the king; "and I desire they be married as soon as possible. Vieilleville, go for M. de Savoie and my sister."

Catherine smiled upon the king in sign of assent, and, accompanying Vieilleville to the door—

"Count," said she, "do not go for M. de Savoie and Madame Marguerite until I open this door again and give you the order myself. Stay in the antechamber, and, on your life, liberty, and soul, not a word of the king's return to existence to any one; but, above all, to Madame de Valentinois!"

"Fear nothing, madame," said Vieilleville. And he remained in the neighboring room, from which the sound of his heavy footfalls might be heard through the closed door, serving to prove the strong emotion of the new marshal.

"Where are you, madame, and what are you doing?" said the king. "I do not wish to lose any time."

"I am here, sire. I was telling M. de Vieilleville where he might find the Duke of Savoy if he did not meet him at his residence."

"Why should he not be at his residence?"

"He will be there. It is only in the evening that he quits his chateau, and he is always back by dawn."

"Ah!" said the king, with a sigh of envy, "there was also a time when I, too, used to canter along the roads on a good steed, during the fine nights: *Per amica silentia lunæ*, as my little daughter-in-law Mary Stuart says. It was sweet to feel the fresh breeze, sweet to see the foliage tremble under the pale light of the moon! Ah! no fever then burned me! Have pity on me, O my God! for, ah, I suffer much!"

During this time Catherine had drawn near the bed; but, as she did so, she made a sign to the two doctors to retire from it.

Ambroise Paré and Vesale replied by a respectful inclination: and, understanding that these two princes of this world had some great secret to discuss at the moment one was about to leave the other, they retired to a window beyond the reach of their voices.

Catherine had resumed her place by the king.

"Well," said Henri, "they are coming, are they not?"

"Yes, sire; but before they come will your Majesty allow me to say a few words on matters of state?"

"Do so, madame," answered the king, "although I am very tired, and I now see the things of this world only through a cloud."

"No matter! no matter! God will light up the cloud through which you see them, and perhaps permit you to pass a safer judgment on them than when you were in health!"

Henri turned painfully toward Catherine, and regarded her with an eye gleaming with fever and intelligence.

It could be seen he was making a mighty effort to place his weakness on a level with that Florentine subtlety whose tortuous profundity he had often occasion to appreciate.

"Speak, madame," he said.

"Pardon, sire," returned Catherine. "It is not my opinion, it is not that of the doctors, who have always good

hopes; but it is yours, is it not, that your life is in serious danger?"

"I am mortally wounded, madame," said the king; "and it is doubtless by a miracle that God permits me to have this last conversation with you."

"Well, sire, if it is a miracle, let us utilize that miracle, to show that the Lord has not wrought it uselessly."

"I am listening to you, madame," said Henri.

"Sire, do you recall what M. de Guise said to you in my apartment, at the moment you were about to sign the unhappy treaty of Chateau-Cambrésis?"

"Yes, madame."

"M. de Guise is a great friend of France."

"Tush!" murmured the king; "a Lorrainer!"

"But, sire," said Catherine, "I am not a Lorrainer."

"No," said Henri, "you are a—"

He stopped.

"Finish," said the queen. "I am a Florentine, and consequently a true ally of the House of France. Well, I tell you, sire, that Lorrainer and Florentine have been, on this occasion, more French than certain Frenchmen."

"I do not say you are wrong," murmured Henri.

"The Lorrainer and Florentine said to you: 'Sire, such a treaty might, at the most, be acceptable to you, if it were proposed the day after the battle of Saint-Laurent or the capture of Saint-Quentin; but to-day, when M. de Guise has arrived from Italy, when we have regained possession of Calais, when we can reckon an army of fifty thousand well-armed men, besides thirty thousand in garrison in our fortresses, such a treaty is a mockery!' That is what the Lorrainer and Florentine said to you, and what you did not wish to hear."

"It is true," said Henri, as if returning from a revery, "and I have been wrong."

"Then you acknowledge it?" said Catherine, her eyes sparkling.

"Yes, I acknowledge it—but it is too late!"

"It is never too late, sire!" replied the Florentine.

"I do not understand you," said the king.

"Will you let me act?" replied Catherine; "will you place your reliance on me, and I will restore you all your French cities; I will restore you Piedmont, Nice, La Bresse, and open the way to the Milanese?"

"And, in return for this, what must be done, madame, if you please?"

"You must, in spite of the majority of the dauphin, say that, considering his feeble health and inexperience, you name a Council of Regency, to last a year, and longer, if necessary, composed of M. de Guise, the Cardinal de Lorraine, and myself, and with power to regulate, during that year, all civil, political, religious, and other affairs."

"And what will François say?"

"He will be delighted. He thinks of nothing but the happiness of being the husband of his little Scotch girl, and has no other ambition."

"Yes," said Henri, "it is a great happiness to be young, and to be the husband of the woman one loves!"

And he sighed.

"But there is one thing," he continued, "that renders all that of no avail: it is that he is King of France; and a King of France must think of his country before thinking of his loves."

Catherine gave a sidelong look at Henri; she was strongly tempted to say to him, "Why hast thou, O king, who givest such good advice, not followed it?"

But she feared to recall to his mind the remembrance of Madame de Valentinois, and she was silent, or rather continued to direct the conversation into the channel where she had first led it.

"And then, if I am regent, M. de Guise lieutenant-general, M. de Lorraine administrator of the finances, we can take charge of everything."

"Of everything!—What do you mean by these words, 'take charge of everything'?"

"Break everything, sire! recover the one hundred and ninety-eight cities—Piedmont, La Bresse, Nice, Savoy, the Milanese."

"Yes," said the king; "and, meanwhile, I shall present myself before my God charged with perjury, making my death the pretext for not keeping my promise! It is too great a sin, madame; I shall not risk it. If I were to live, I do not say—I might have time to repent!"

Then, raising his voice—

"M. de Vieilleville!" said he.

"What are you doing?" said she.

"I am calling for M. de Vieilleville, who very surely has not gone for the Duke of Savoy."

"And why do you call him?"

"In order that he may go."

In fact, Vieilleville, who heard the call, returned on the moment.

"M. de Vieilleville," said the king, "you have done well to wait for a second order before going to M. de Savoie, since the queen desired you to wait; I give you this second order.—Go, then, immediately, and in five minutes let M. de Savoie and Madame Marguerite be here!"

Then, as he felt himself growing weaker, he looked around him, and, perceiving the two doctors, who, on hearing Henri's voice, had drawn near to each other—

"Just now," said he, "some one forced me to drink a few drops of a liquor that has revived me. I want to live an hour longer; bring me a few more drops of that liquor."

Vesale took the silver-gilt spoon, poured out five or six drops of the crimson beverage, and, while Ambroise Paré raised the head of the dying prince, passing his hands behind his ears, he glided them between his lips.

However, M. de Vieilleville, not daring to disobey the commands of the king, went for the Duke of Savoy and Madame Marguerite.

Catherine, standing by the bedside, was smiling on the king, with rage in her heart.

XVI

A KING HAS ONLY HIS WORD

FIVE minutes after, Emmanuel Philibert entered by one door, and Marguerite by another.

A flash of joy passed across the faces of the two young people on seeing the king restored to life.

In fact, thanks to the drops which Henri had just swallowed, there was, in comparison to the lethargic state in which they had left him, a remarkable improvement.

Catherine took a step backward, to yield the place she held near the bed to Emmanuel and Marguerite.

Both knelt before the dying king.

"It is good," said Henri, regarding them with a gentle and sad smile; "you look well thus, my children. Remain, then, where you are."

"Oh, sire!" said Emmanuel, "what hope!"

"Oh, my brother!" said Marguerite, "what happiness!"

"Yes," said Henri, "it is a happiness, and I thank God for it; I have regained consciousness. But there is no hope. Let us not, therefore, count on what cannot be, but rather act like people in a hurry. Emmanuel, take the hand of my sister."

Emmanuel obeyed; the hand of Marguerite, it is true, had just travelled half the way to meet his.

"Prince," continued Henri, "I desired your marriage with my sister when I was well. To-day, that I am dying, I do more than desire it, I command it."

"Sire!" exclaimed the Duke of Savoy.

"My good brother!" said Marguerite, kissing his hand.

"Listen," returned Henri, "listen, Emmanuel"—and

there was an overpowering solemnity in his voice—"not only are you now a great prince, thanks to the provinces I have restored to you; a noble gentleman, thanks to your ancestors; but you are an honest man, thanks to your upright mind and generous heart. Emmanuel, it is to the honest man I address myself."

Emmanuel Philibert raised his noble head; the loyalty of his soul shone in his eyes, and in that sweet and firm voice which was peculiar to him—

"Speak, sire!" he said.

"Emmanuel," said Henri, "a peace has just been signed; this peace is disadvantageous to France—"

Emmanuel made a movement.

"But that does not matter, since it is signed," continued the king. "This peace makes you the ally of France and Spain at the same time: you are King Philip's cousin, but you are going to be the uncle of François II. Your sword is to-day a great weight in the balance in which God weighs the destinies of nations; it is the sword that has made an opening in our ranks at the battle of Saint-Laurent; it is the sword that has overturned the ramparts of Saint-Quentin. Well, I adjure that sword to be as just as its master is loyal, as terrible as its master is courageous. If the peace sworn between me and King Philip II. is broken by France, let that sword turn against France; if that peace is broken by Spain, let it turn against Spain. If the place of constable was vacant, God is my witness that I would give it to you, as the prince who has married my sister, as the knight who defends the marches of my realm; unfortunately this post is held by a man from whom I ought to withdraw it, perhaps, but who, on the whole, has served me, or believed he served me, loyally. No matter. Justice and right are the only ties that bind you; now, if justice and right are for France, your arm and your sword for France. If justice and right are for Spain, your arm and your sword against France. Do you swear this, Duke of Savoy?"

Emmanuel Philibert stretched out his hand toward Henri.

"By the loyal heart," said he, "that appeals to my loyalty, I swear it!"

Henri breathed again.

"Thanks!" said he.

Then, after a moment during which he appeared to be mentally thanking God—

"And now," he resumed, "on what day are the necessary formalities for your marriage, which have been delayed until to-day, to be accomplished?"

"On the 9th of July, sire."

"Well, swear to me again that, whether I am alive or dead, near my bed or on my tomb, your marriage will be celebrated on the 9th of July."

Marguerite cast a quick glance at Emmanuel—a glance in which lay hidden a remnant of anxiety.

But he, drawing the head of Marguerite close to his own, and kissing her on the brow, as he might have done a sister—

"Sire," said he, "receive this second oath, as you have done the first. I pronounce them both with equal solemnity, and may God inflict an equal punishment on me, if I fail in one or the other!"

Marguerite turned pale, and seemed ready to faint.

At this moment the door opened very slowly, as if the hand that moved it was very timid and hesitating, and the head of the dauphin looked into the chamber.

"Who enters?" asked the king, all whose senses were marked by that sharpness peculiar to invalids.

"Oh, my father speaks!" cried François, losing all his timidity, and he ran into the room.

The face of the king brightened.

"Yes, my son," answered Henri; "and you are welcome in this chamber, for I have something important to say to you."

Then, to the Duke of Savoy—

"Emmanuel," he continued, "you have just embraced my sister, who is going to be your wife; embrace my son, who will be your nephew."

The duke took the boy in his arms, pressed him tenderly against his breast, and kissed him on both cheeks.

"You will remember your two oaths, brother," said the king.

"Yes, sire, and one as faithfully as the other, I swear it to you!"

"'Tis well; now leave me alone with the dauphin."

Emmanuel and Marguerite retired.

But Catherine remained in the same place.

"Well?" said the king, addressing her.

"Am I also to retire, sire?" demanded Catherine.

"Yes, madame, you also."

"When the king desires to see me again, he will recall me," said the Florentine.

"This conversation finished, you can return, madame, whether I call you or not. But," he added with a sad smile, "it is probable I shall not have you called, for I feel myself growing weaker. Nevertheless, come always."

Catherine started to go out directly, but doubtless she reflected, and, describing a curve, she bowed down over the bed and kissed the hand of the king.

Then she departed, leaving behind her, in the chamber of the dying, if we may so express ourselves, a prolonged look of anxiety.

Though the king heard the door close on Catherine, he still waited a moment; then addressing the dauphin—

"Your mother is no longer there, François?" he asked.

"No, sire," replied the dauphin.

"Bolt the door, and return promptly to the bedside, for I feel my strength leaving me."

François hastened to obey; he pushed the bolt, and returning near the king—

"Oh, my God, sire!" said he, "you are very pale. What can I do to aid you?"

"Call the doctors first," said Henri.

"Messieurs," said François, turning to the two physicians, "come quick; the king is calling you."

Vesale and Ambroise Paré drew near the bed.

"You see?" said Vesale to his *confrère*, whom he had doubtless warned of the approaching death of the king.

"Messieurs," said Henri, "strength! strength! give me strength!"

"Sire," replied Vesale, hesitating.

"Have you no more of that elixir?" asked the dying man.

"Yes, I have some, sire."

"Well?"

"This liquor gives only an artificial strength."

"Well, what matter, provided only that it be strength?"

"And perhaps its abuse may shorten the days of your Majesty."

"Monsieur," returned the king, "the question is no longer as to the duration of my days. All I ask is to be able to say to the dauphin what I have to say to him, and then die at the last word."

"Sire, an order of your Majesty—but it was with some hesitation already that I gave you this liquor a second time."

"Give me this elixir a third time, monsieur," said the king; "I will it!"

And his head sank back on the pillow, and his eyes closed, and so deadly a paleness spread over his cheeks that one would have thought him about to expire.

"My father is dying! my father is dying!" exclaimed François.

"Make haste, André," said Ambroise; "the king is very bad!"

"The king has still three or four hours to live; do not be afraid," replied Vesale.

And, without using the silver-gilt spoon, he let some drops of the elixir drop on the half-open mouth of the king.

The effect was slower this time than before, but it was not less efficacious.

Some seconds had hardly elapsed when the muscles of his face shivered, the blood appeared to circulate anew under the skin, the teeth parted, and the eyes opened, glassy at first, then gradually growing brighter.

The king drew a breath, or rather sighed.

"Ah," said he, "thanks be to God!"

And he glanced round for the dauphin.

"Here I am!" said François, on his knees before the bed, and drawing toward the pillow.

"Paré," said the king, "raise me with pillows, and put my arm round the neck of the dauphin, so that I may support myself on him in descending the last step of the tomb."

The two practitioners were still near the king; then with that ability which the anatomical knowledge of the human body gives, Vesale slipped the cushions of a sofa behind the pillows, raised Henri so as to place him sitting, while Ambroise Paré placed around the dauphin's neck the king's arm, to which paralysis was already giving the coldness and heaviness of death.

Then both discreetly retired.

The king made an effort, and the lips of the father touched those of the child.

"Father!" murmured the boy, while two big tears coursed down his cheeks.

"My son," said the king, "you are sixteen, you are a man; and I am going to speak to you as to a man."

"Sire!"

"I say more: you are a king—for am I now of any account in the world?—and I am going to speak to you as to a king."

"Speak, my father," said the young man.

"My son," said Henri, "I have committed through weakness, never through hatred or malice, many faults during my life."

François made a movement.

"Let me speak. It is fitting I should confess to you, my successor, in order that you may avoid the faults into which I have fallen."

"These faults, my father, do not exist," said the dauphin; "it is not you who have committed them."

"No, my child; but it is I who am answerable for them before God and before men. One of the last and greatest was committed at the instigation of the constable and Madame de Valentinois. I had a bandage over my eyes; I was insensate—I ask your pardon, my son."

"Oh, sire! sire!" cried the dauphin.

"This fault is the peace signed with Spain—it is the abandonment of Piedmont, Nice, Savoy, and the Milanese, of a hundred and ninety-eight strong places, in exchange for which France receives only Saint-Quentin, Ham, and Le Catelet. You are listening?"

"Yes, my father."

"Just now your mother was there; she reproached me for this fault, and she offered to repair it—"

"How could that be," said the dauphin, with a start, "since your word is pledged?"

"Good, François! good!" said Henri; "yes, the fault is great, but my word is pledged. François, whatever they may say to you, whatever seductions they may employ or motives they may adduce; though a woman should beseech you in her boudoir; though a priest should adjure you in the confessional; though by the aid of magic they should evoke my phantom to make you believe that the order comes from me—my son, on the honor of my name, which is the brightness of yours, change nothing in the treaty of Chateau-Cambrésis, disastrous though it be. Change nothing, because it is disastrous especially, and keep always, in your mouth and in your heart, this maxim of King John, 'A king of France has but his word!' "

"Father," said François, "I swear, by the honor of your name, it shall be as you desire."

"If your mother insists?"

"I shall tell her I am your son as well as hers."

"If she orders?"

"I shall answer that I am king, and that it is for me to give orders, not to receive them."

And, while saying these words, the young prince drew himself up with all that majesty peculiar to the Valois.

"Good, my son!" replied Henri, "good! this is what I had to tell you. And now adieu! I feel that I am growing weak, I feel my eyes closing, and my voice dying away. My son, repeat over my motionless body the same oath you have just taken, so that you may be at the same time pledged to the living and the dead. Then, when the oath is taken, and I unconscious, and therefore dead, you may let your mother enter. Adieu, François! adieu, my son! embrace your father for the last time. Sire, you are King of France!"

And the head of Henri fell back motionless on the pillow.

François followed with his supple body, as flexible as a reed, the movement of the body of his father; then rising and solemnly laying his hand upon that body, which might from that moment be considered a corpse—

"Father," said he, "I renew to you my oath to keep faithfully the peace sworn to, disastrous though it be for France! to neither take from, nor add to the treaty of Chateau-Cambrésis, no matter what pressure is brought to bear upon me, no matter who is the person that urges me! God receive my oath as you have received it. 'A king of France has only his word!'"

And, having kissed for the last time the pale and cold lips of his father, he opened for Queen Catherine, whom he found standing rigid and motionless behind the door, waiting impatiently for the end of this conversation at which she was not allowed to be present.

On the 9th of July following, beside the bed of the king, in whom there was still some life, although its presence was

detected only by a slight breathing which hardly tarnished the mirror, Emmanuel Philibert of Savoy took solemnly for wife Marguerite of France, Duchesse de Berry, the Cardinal de Lorraine officiating and all the court attending this ceremony, which was to be completed by the glare of torches a little after midnight in the church of Saint-Paul.

About four in the afternoon of the following day—that is to say, at the very hour when he had been so unfortunately struck by Comte Montgomery—the king breathed forth the last sigh without effort or convulsion, just as André Vesale had predicted.

He was forty years, three months, and ten days old, and had reigned twelve years and three months.

He had one merit more than his father: dead, he kept that faith toward Philip II. which, living, his father had not kept to Charles V.

The same day Madame de Valentinois, who had remained at the palace of Les Tournelles until the last sigh of the king, left this palace and retired to her chateau of Anet.

The same evening all the court returned to the Louvre. The two doctors and four priests alone remained near the royal corpse—the doctors to embalm him, the priests to pray for him.

At the street gate, Catherine de Médicis and Mary Stuart met.

Catherine, following a habit contracted since eighteen years, was about to pass first; but suddenly she stopped, and giving way to Mary Stuart—

"Pass, madame," she said with a sigh; "you are the queen."

XVII

WHERE THE TREATY IS EXECUTED

HENRI II. died like a true king of France, rising from his bed of agony to ratify his promises.

On the 3d of July, 1559, letters patent were issued restoring his states to Emmanuel Philibert.

The prince immediately sent, for the purpose of giving effect to this restoration, three of the lords who were the most faithful to him in his evil fortunes. They were his lieutenant-general in Piedmont, Amédée de Valpergue, his lieutenant-general in Savoy, Marshal of Chatam, and his lieutenant-general in Bresse, Philibert de la Beaume, lord of Montfalconnet.

This fidelity of Henri II. to his word exasperated the whole nobility of France, of whom Brantome makes himself the organ.

"The matter," says the chronicler, "was put to deliberation and strongly debated in the council: some affirmed that François II. was not obliged to fulfil the engagements sworn to by his father, particularly in relation to an inferior power; others were in favor of waiting till the majority of the king: they said that the Duchess of Savoy had already brought only too many advantages to her husband, and that the establishment of ten daughters of France would have cost less to the crown.

"For," adds the Sire de Brantome, "from great to great there is only the hand, but not from great to little. It is for the great to exact; it is for the little to be contented with what the great condescends to assign it, and the

strongest is bound to regulate itself only by its own right and convenience."

A large and easy code of morality, as may be seen, and if it is practiced in our days a veil at least is thrown over the theory.

It was natural, therefore, that the French, who had held Piedmont for twenty years, should have all the difficulty imaginable in giving it up, and should almost revolt against the orders of the court.

Three successive commands had to be sent to Maréchal de Bourdillon before he would evacuate the places of security, and before consigning them to the Piedmontese officers he required that the order should be enregistered by the parliament.

As to Emmanuel Philibert, whatever might be his desire to return to his states, he was still retained in France by certain indispensable duties.

First, he had to go to Brussels to take leave of King Philip II., and surrender the government of the Low Countries, which he held from him.

Philip appointed his natural sister, Margaret of Austria, Duchess of Parma, to succeed the Duke of Savoy; then considering that he had been too long absent from Spain, he decided to return to his native country with his young spouse.

Emmanuel Philibert did not wish to abandon Philip II. until, to use his own expression, there was no land left on which to follow him; so he accompanied him as far as Middlebourg, where the king embarked on the 25th of August.

Emmanuel Philibert then returned to Paris to be present at the coronation of the young king.

The young king set out for the chateau of Villers-Cotterets with all his court, under the pretext of living retired, but, in reality, to amuse himself at his ease. Fathers who leave a throne as an inheritance are seldom regretted long.

"The king," says M. de Montpleinchamp, one of the historians of Emmanuel Philibert, "went to the chateau of Villers-Cotterets *to divert himself*, and took with him the Duke of Savoy, his uncle, who fell ill there of fever."

The chateau of Villers-Cotterets, begun by François I., had just been finished by Henri II., and there may still be seen to-day, on the façade facing the church, the cipher of King Henri II. and Catherine de Médicis, an H. and a K.—Catherine was then written with a K—surrounded by the three crescents of Diane de Poitiers; singular alliance! Less singular, however, in this epoch than in ours, of the adjunction of the mistress to the conjugal life.

The good Princess Marguerite, who adored her fair Duke of Savoy, acted as his nurse, not allowing him to take anything from any hand but hers. Luckily, the fever that held him under was only a fever caused by fatigue and sombre regrets. Emmanuel Philibert had regained possession of his royal duchy, but he had lost the heart of his heart; Leona had returned to Savoy, and was waiting, at the village of Oleggio, for that 17th of November which was to reunite them each year.

At last, the powerful fairy whom men call youth conquered fatigue and sorrow; the fever took flight on a last ray of the summer's sun, and on the 21st of September, Duke Emmanuel was able to accompany to Rheims the young king and queen—François and Mary Stuart had just thirty-four years between them—and assist at the ceremony of their coronation.

At the moment when God let His eyes rest on him whom the holy oil made His elect, He must surely have taken pity on that king who was to live only a year, then to die in a mysterious manner, and on that queen who was to remain a prisoner for twenty years, then to die a bloody death.

In another book, of which the first chapters are already written,[1] we intend depicting this reign of four months and twenty-five days, during which so many events took place.

[1] "The Horoscope."

As soon as the king was crowned and led back to Paris, Emmanuel Philibert found himself in some sort freed from his obligations to these two crowned heads, and he took leave of his nephew of France as he had taken leave of his cousin of Spain, in order to return into his states, from which he had been absent so many years.

The Duchess Marguerite accompanied her spouse as far as Lyons; but there she separated from him. The condition of this poor duchy of Savoy, after a foreign occupation of twenty-three years, was surely likely to be very deplorable, and Duke Emmanuel was naturally anxious that his country should assume a somewhat orderly appearance before he showed it to his spouse; then, it must be said, the month of November was approaching, and ever since Leona had quitted Emmanuel at Ecouen, Emmanuel had his eye riveted on that luminous point of the 17th of November, as in a sad and sombre night the pilot has his eye riveted on the only star that shines in his sky.

Scianca-Ferro led back the duchess to Paris; and the duke, after a run to La Bresse, returned to Lyons, embarked on the Rhone, where he was near perishing in a tempest, then, having landed at Avignon, he made his way to Marseilles, where a company of Savoyard lords was waiting for him brought thither by André de Provana.

This brave company, composed of gentlemen who had remained faithful to the duke, was too impatient to greet the duke to wait for him on their lands.

In the midst of the festivals celebrated by Marseilles in honor of the Duke of Savoy, a circumstance occurred which proved that he was not forgotten by his royal nephew. François II. sent his uncle the order of Saint-Michael—for that matter, not a very rare present; the King of France had just given it, a little at haphazard, to eighteen persons, among whom were twelve whose merit might be disputed. "So they called this collar," says the historian from whom we have borrowed these details, "*the beasts' collar!*" But with his usual courtesy Emmanuel took and kissed it, saying—

"All that comes from my nephew is dear to me; all that comes from the King of France is precious to me."

And he immediately hung it round his neck, near the collar of the Golden Fleece, as a sign that there was no difference between the gifts that came from the King of France and those that came from the King of Spain.

At Marseilles, the duke embarked for Nice—Nice, the only city that remained to him when he had lost all the others, or when all the others had abandoned him. It is true that Nice means victory; so the writers of the time, great wits every one of them, did not fail to say that amid all his misfortunes *Victory* remained faithful to Emmanuel Philibert.

It ought to have filled Emmanuel with great joy and at the same time with great pride to return as a man and as a victorious prince to that castle which he had of yore entered as a child and a fugitive. But we do not care to make an attempt at telling what was passing within him; to do so would be to give a history of the sensations, and we are not acquainted with any historian clever enough to accomplish such a task successfully.

There only, and by the relations of the faithful servants he had kept in Piedmont, La Bresse, and Savoy, he had an exact account of the situation of these three provinces; the country was in ruins.

The transalpine provinces, hemmed in by the French territory, were entirely opened up and cut in two by the appanage of the Duc de Nemours, who was attached to France.

This was a relic of the policy of François I. François I., in order to detach from Charles III., Emmanuel's father, even his nearest relatives, invited to his court Charles's younger brother Philip, whose appanage embraced almost the half of Savoy. Then he married him to Charlotte of Orléans and invested him with the duchy of Nemours. The reader will remember having seen at Saint-Germain Jacques de Nemours, son of Philip, and will also re-

member that he was entirely devoted to the interests of France.

On the other hand, the Bernese and Valaisians contested with Emmanuel the possessions they had taken from his father on the banks of Lake Leman; and as their claims were sustained by Geneva, a nursery of heresy and independence, it was evident he would have to treat with them.

Moreover, Piedmont, La Bresse, and Savoy had no strong fortresses, the French having destroyed such as gave them trouble, and having preserved only the citadels of the five cities which they were to garrison until the Duchess of Savoy had a son. Moreover, it was the French who imposed the taxes and who collected them; therefore no financial resources of any sort whatsoever were in existence, even the furniture of the ducal palaces was in a dilapidated condition, and as to his crown jewels, the prince had long ago turned them into money: however, he intended to recover them some day.

To make head against this impoverished state of affairs, all the duke possessed on returning to his states was some five or six hundred thousand gold crowns, coming partly from the dowry of Princess Marguerite, and partly from the ransoms of Montmorency and Dandelot.

Besides, absence and misfortune, those two great dissolvents of all duty and of all devotion, had produced their ordinary effect; the nobles, who had not seen Emmanuel since he was a child, had forgotten their prince, and become accustomed to live as a free confederation. Such things were common enough in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries even in the states of monarchs who were respected and obeyed: how much more were they expected to prevail in the territories of those who, impotent to protect themselves, could not protect others!

We can understand, therefore, why it was, for instance, that Philippe de Comines abandoned the Duke of Burgundy for Louis XI.: that Tanneguy du Chatel and Vicomte de Rohan, subjects of the Duke of Brittany, passed over to the

side of France, while Durfé, a subject of the King of France, became a follower of the Duke of Brittany.

Furthermore, a great number of these gentlemen, while remaining Savoyards, had become pensionaries of King François or King Philip, and wore the scarf of France or of Spain; in fine, ingratitude, like a leprosy of the heart, had seized on the great, while there was indifference and forgetfulness among the little.

The reason for this was that the towns of Piedmont had by little and little grown accustomed to the presence of the French. The conquerors, indeed, had shown themselves very moderate; they levied only such contributions as were actually necessary to them, and as they did not establish any local police, every one could live as he liked. Most of the offices were salable; and the magistrates, being in a hurry to recover the amounts they had paid, did not repress, or repressed only very feebly, a system of rapine of which they themselves gave the example.

Brantome has this to say on the same subject:

"During the time of Louis XI. and François I., there was in Italy neither king's lieutenant nor governor of province who did not deserve, after remaining two or three years in his office, to have his head chopped off for his extortions and rapacity. The state of Milan would have been peacefully assured to us but for the great oppression and the great wrongs that were committed there, and we lost everything!"

It resulted that all who had remained attached to the government of their native princes were oppressed or in obscurity, since to remain attached to Emmanuel Philibert, general of the Austrian, Flemish, and Spanish armies against France, was naturally to regard the French occupation as oppressive and hostile.

The few days Emmanuel spent at Nice were holidays: children seeing again a father after a long absence, a father seeing again the children he had believed lost, could not

express their joy and love in a more tender fashion. Emmanuel deposited in the treasury of the citadel three hundred thousand crowns of gold destined to raise the ramparts of the city, and to found, on that rocky crest which separates the port of Villa-Franca from that of Limpia, the chateau of Montalban, which, on account of its smallness, the Venetian ambassador Lipomano called the model in relief of a citadel. Then he set out for Coni—the town which, with Nice, had been most faithful to him, and which, having no artillery, had some cast at its own expense, in order to be able to cling to its prince. Emmanuel rewarded it by quartering his blazon with the white cross of Savoy, and permitting its inhabitants to bear the title of citizen, instead of that of bourgeois.

Another subject also engaged his most serious attention: just as France had her Huguenots, who were soon to give rude shocks to the thrones of François II. and Charles IX., so Emmanuel was confronted by the religious sect which dwelt in the Piedmontese Alps.

Geneva had adopted Lutheranism in 1535, and became soon after the capital of the disciples of Calvin; but the Israel of the Alps had existed since the tenth century.

About the middle of this tenth century, which, according to tradition, was to be the last of the world, and the half of the human race was uttering one mighty cry of terror at the approach of universal agony, a number of Christian families, connected with the Paulicians, a division of the Manichæans, had come from the east and spread over Italy, where they left traces of themselves under the name of *Paterini*, and penetrated into the valleys of Pragelas, Lucerne, and Saint-Martin.

There, in the depths of those remote gorges, they took root like wild flowers, and lived pure and unknown in the clefts of their rocks, which they believed inaccessible; their soul was free as that of the bird which cleaves the azure sky, their conscience white as the snow on the summits of

Mount Rosa and Mount Viso, those European brothers of Tabor and Sinai. The Paterini did not recognize any of the modern heresiarchs as their founder: they claimed the doctrines of the primitive Church had been preserved by them in all their purity; the ark of the Lord, they said, rested on the mountains where they dwelt, and while the Roman Church was submerged under a deluge of errors, among them only had the divine torch remained a fire. Consequently, they entitled themselves not *reformed*, but *reformers*.

And, in fact, this church, with its austere morality and its robe seamless as that of Christ—this church had religiously preserved the spirit, rites, usages, of the early Christians. The gospel was its law; the worship flowing from that law—the least complicated of all human cults—was the bond of a fraternal community whose members met only to love and pray. Their crime—for, in order to persecute them, it was necessary to find in them a crime—their crime consisted in their holding that Constantine, by endowing the popes with great wealth, had corrupted Christian society. They based their belief on these words issuing from the mouth of Christ, "The Son of man has not where to lay his head!" and on these, "It is harder for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven than for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle!" This crime drew on them the rigors of an institution then newly established, which is now known as the Inquisition.

Massacres and the stake tried them for four centuries—for it was from them that the Albigenses in Languedoc, the Hussites in Bohemia, the Vaudois in Apulia, drew their origin; but nothing could relax their faith, or even their spirit of proselytism. Their missionaries travelled incessantly, not only to visit their infant churches, but to found new ones. Their principal apostles were: Valdo of Lyons, who gave them the name of *Vaudois*; then the famous Bérenger; then Ludovico Pasquale, a preacher in Calabria; then Giovanni of Lucerne, a preacher in Genoa; finally,

several brothers named Molines, sent to catechise in Bohemia, Hungary, and Dalmatia.

At first, the Savoyard princes saw in the Vaudois only an isolated, inoffensive little people of gentle manners and pure doctrine. But when such great upsetters of systems and disturbers of ideas as Luther and Calvin arrived, and the Vaudois united with them, the Vaudois, a branch of the immense tree of the Reformation, ceased to be a sect in the Church, and became a party in the State.

During the misfortunes of Charles III. they had, as we have said, spread through the valleys of Pragelas, Lucerne, and Saint-Martin, and had gained a great number of partisans in the plain and even in the cities of Piedmont, as well as in Chieri, Avignon, and Turin; consequently, François I., the ally of the Turks of Constantinople and of the German Protestants, ordered the Senate of Turin in 1534 to pass the most severe and rigorous laws against them, and his military commanders to second the Inquisition enforcing the Vaudois to hear Mass or leave the country.

There was, then, the greatest agitation in the Vaudois valleys when Emmanuel Philibert arrived, on the 16th of November, at Verceil—one of the castles, it will be remembered, in which his childhood had been passed.

XVIII

THE 17TH OF NOVEMBER

ON THE morning of the 17th of November a cavalier, muffled in a large cloak, leaped from the saddle at the door of a little house in Oleggio, and received in his arms a woman, half fainting with joy and happiness.

The cavalier was Emmanuel Philibert; the woman was Leona.

Although five months had hardly elapsed since Emmanuel had quitted Leona at Ecouen, an immense change had taken place in the young woman. It was the change wrought in a flower, which, accustomed to the sunlight, has been suddenly transported to the shade; the change wrought in the bird, that free musician of the air, when suddenly shut up in a cage: the flower would lose its color, the bird its song.

The cheeks of Leona had grown pale, her eyes sad, her voice grave.

The first moments given to the happiness of seeing each other again, the first words exchanged with the foolish lavishness of joy, Emmanuel regarded his love with an air of anxiety: the hand of sorrow had been placed on her face, and left its fatal impress there.

She smiled at the questioning look of the prince.

"I see what you are in search of, my beloved Emmanuel: you are in search of the page of the Duke of Savoy, the joyous companion of Nice and Hesdin; you are in search of Leone!"

Emmanuel heaved a sigh.

"The latter," she continued, with a smile of deep sadness, "is dead, and you will never see him more. But his sister Leona remains, and to her he has bequeathed his love and devotion for you!"

"Oh, what does it matter?" exclaimed Emmanuel; "it is Leona I love; it is Leona I shall always love!"

"Love her very quickly, then, and very tenderly," said the young woman, with the same sad smile.

"And why so?" asked Emmanuel.

"My father died young; my mother, too, died young; and within a year I shall have reached the years of my mother!"

Emmanuel, shuddering, pressed her against his heart; then, in an altered voice—

"But what is that you are saying, Leona?" he cried.

"Nothing terrifying, my love, now that I know that God permits the dead to watch over the living!"

"No, I do not understand you, Leona," said Emmanuel, who was beginning to be seriously disturbed by the dreamy, abstracted look of the young woman.

"How many hours can you give me, my beloved?" asked Leona.

"Oh, the whole day! the whole night! Was it not agreed that once a year you would belong to me for twenty-four hours?"

"Yes. Well, I shall defer till to-morrow what I have to say to you! Till then, my beloved, let us live in the past. But, alas!" she added, with a sigh, "that past is my future!" And she made a sign to Emmanuel to follow her.

Having taken up her dwelling a little time before in the village of Oleggio, in this house which she had bought, and which she had erected into a tabernacle rather than furnished as a house, she was still unknown to every one; Emmanuel Philibert, who had not returned to Piedmont since childhood, was still more unknown than she.

The peasants gazed, then, on this fine young man of scarcely thirty, and on this fine young woman, apparently twenty-five, without suspecting that they were looking on the prince who held the well-being of Piedmont in his hands, and on one who held the heart of the prince in hers.

Where were they going?

It was Leona who was conducting Emmanuel.

From time to time she stopped; and, approaching a group—

"Listen!" said she to Emmanuel.

Then she questioned the peasants.

"What are you talking about, my friends?"

And they would answer—

"What else could we talk about, fair lady, except the return of our prince to his states?"

Thereupon, Emmanuel came forward and took part in the conversation.

"What do you think of him?" he asked.

"What could we think of him?" they said. "We do not know him!"

"You know him by fame?" said Leona.

"Yes, as a brave captain. But what good are brave captains to us? The men who make war on one another to sustain their reputation are brave captains; and war means barrenness for our fields, depopulation for our villages, and mourning for our wives and daughters!"

And Leona looked upon Emmanuel with eyes full of entreaty.

"You understand?" she murmured.

"Then what you desire from your prince, my good people, is—?"

"That he rid us of the foreigner; that he give us back peace and justice!"

"In the name of the duke," said Leona, "I promise you all this; for Duke Emmanuel Philibert is not only a brave captain, as you say, but has also a great heart!"

"In that case," cried the peasants, "long live our young Duke Emmanuel Philibert!"

The prince pressed Leona to his heart; for, like a second Egeria, she made known to this second Numa the true desires of his people.

"Oh!" said he, "why cannot I, my darling Leona, make the tour of my states with you in this fashion!"

And Leona smiled sadly.

"I will be always with you!" she murmured.

And then, in a tone so low that she alone and God could hear it—

"And much more even than now," she added, "later on!"

They left the village.

"I would have wished, my beloved," said Leona, "to conduct you where we are going, over a pathway covered with flowers; but, as you see, both heaven and earth are in sympathy with the anniversary which we celebrate to-day: the earth is sad and bereaved—it represents death; the sun is bright, yet gentle—it represents life;—death, which is fleeting as the winter; life, which is eternal as the sun! Do you recognize the spot where you found death and life together?"

Emmanuel Philibert looked around him, and uttered a cry: he recognized the place where he had twenty-five years before found, near a stream, a woman, dead, and a child almost dead.

"Ah! it was here, was it not?" he cried.

"Yes," replied Leona, with a sad smile; "it was indeed here!"

Emmanuel took his poniard, cut a branch of willow, and planted it on the spot where the mother of Leona had lain.

"There," said he, "shall rise a chapel to our Lady of Mercy."

"And the Mother of Sorrows," added Leona.

Then she set about gathering some late autumn flowers, on the bank of the stream; while Emmanuel, grave and

pensive, leaning against the willow from which he had cut a branch, saw his entire life pass before him.

"Oh!" said he, of a sudden, drawing Leona toward him and pressing her to his breast, "you have been the visible angel who, through the rough paths I have followed, have guided me from the point from which I started to the point whither I have returned!"

"And I swear to you, my beloved duke," returned Leona, "to continue in the world of spirit the mission I have received in the world of men!"

Emmanuel regarded the young woman with that anxiety he had experienced when he saw her again.

Leona, with her hand extended, her face palely lighted up by the dying sun of autumn, seemed already much more a shadow than a living creature.

Emmanuel bent his head, and heaved a sigh.

"Ah! at last you begin to understand," said Leona; "as I can no longer be thine, as I have not the strength to remain longer in this world, I can now only belong to God!"

"Leona! Leona!" exclaimed Emmanuel. "That is not what you promised me at Brussels and at Ecouen!"

"Oh!" said Leona, "I perform more than I promised, my beloved duke! I promised to see you again once every year, and now I find that is not enough; and, by dint of prayers, I have obtained from God the grace of a speedy death, so that I may never again leave you at all!"

Emmanuel shuddered, as if, instead of the words that struck on his ear, the wing of the angel of death had grazed his heart.

"To die! to die!" said he. "But do you know, then, what is on the other side of life? Have you, like Dante Alighieri of Florence, descended into the mysteries of the tomb, to speak of dying?"

Leona smiled.

"I have not descended, like Dante Alighieri of Flor-

ence, into the tomb," she said; "but an angel has issued forth from it, who has conversed with me on the mysteries of life and death."

"My God!" cried Emmanuel, looking at the young woman with an expression that denoted incipient terror; "Leona, are you quite sure you are in full possession of your reason?"

Leona smiled; it could be seen that she had all the deep and gentle security of conviction.

"I have seen my mother," she said.

Emmanuel pushed Leona from him, but without letting go her hands, and looked at her with eyes that grew more and more astonished.

"Your mother?" he exclaimed.

"Yes, my mother," said Leona, with a tranquillity that sent a shudder through the veins of her lover.

"And when?" asked Emmanuel.

"During last night."

"And where and at what hour did you see her?"

"At midnight, near my bed."

"You have seen her?" persisted Emmanuel.

"Yes," replied Leona.

"And she spoke to you?"

"She spoke to me."

The prince wiped away with one hand the sweat that was bedewing his brow, and with the other pressed Leona to his heart, as if to assure himself that it was a living being, and not a phantom, he had before his eyes.

"Oh!" he cried, "tell me again, my dear child, what you have seen; tell me again what has passed!"

"In the first place," returned Leona, "ever since I have quitted you, I have dreamed every night of the two persons I love best in the world—you and my mother."

"Leona!" said the prince, pressing his lips on the brow of the young woman.

"My brother!" replied the latter, as if to give to the kiss she received all the chastity of a fraternal embrace.

The duke hesitated an instant; then, in a stifled voiee—

"Well, yes, my sister!" said he.

"Thanks!" said Leona, with a divine smile. "Oh, now I am sure never to leave you more!" And, of her own accord, she offered her brow for a second kiss; but Emmanuel simply rested his head against it.

"I am listening," he murmured.

"I was telling you, my beloved, that ever sinee I left Eeouen I have dreamed each night of you and my mother; but all that was but dreaming, and it was only last night that I had the vision—"

"Go on; speak!"

"I was sleeping; I was awakened by an icy pressure. I opened my eyes; a woman clad in white, and veiled, was by my bed; it was this woman who had kissed me on the forehead. I was about to utter a cry; she raised her veil, and I recognized my mother."

"Leona! Leona! are you thinking well of what you are saying?" cried Emmanuel.

Leona smiled.

"I stretched my arms to embrace her," she continued; "but she made a sign, and my arms fell inert by my side. I was chained to my bed; it seemed as if my eyes alone lived. My eyes were fixed on the phantom, and my mouth murmured, 'My mother!' "

Emmanuel started.

"Oh, I was not afraid; I was happy!"

"And you say, Leona, that the phantom spoke to you?"

"Yes. 'My daughter,' it said, 'this is not the first time that God has permitted me to see you again since my death; and often, in your sleep, must you have felt me near you. For often have I come, gliding between the curtains, as now, to see you sleep; but this is the first time that God has permitted me to speak to you.' 'Speak, mother,' I answered; 'I listen.' 'My daughter,' continued the phantom, 'in favor of the White Cross of Savoy, to which you have

sacrificed your love, not only does God pardon you, but permits that when any great danger threatens the duke you may give him warning—' "

The duke regarded Leona doubtfully.

" 'To-morrow, when the duke comes to see you, you will tell him of the holy mission wherewith the Lord has charged you; then, as he will doubt—' For the phantom warned me that you would doubt, my beloved!"

"Yes, indeed, Leona!" replied Emmanuel, "what you are telling me is extraordinary enough to permit of my doubting it!"

" 'Then, as he will doubt,' pursued the phantom, 'you will tell him that at the very hour when a bird will settle on the branch of willow he has cut and planted, and sing—that is to say, on the 17th of November, at three in the afternoon—Scianca-Ferro will arrive at Verceil, bearing a letter from the Duchess Marguerite. Then he will be forced to believe.' And the phantom lowered her veil, murmuring, 'Adieu, my daughter! you will see me again at the proper time!' After which she vanished."

And no sooner had Leona ceased speaking than a bird, which seemed to drop from the skies, settled on the branch of willow planted by the duke, and began to sing melodiously.

Leona smiled.

"You see, my dear duke," she said, "at this moment Scianca-Ferro is entering Verceil, where you will find him to-morrow."

"In truth," replied Emmanuel, "if what you announce is true, it will be a miracle."

"And will you believe me then?"

"Yes."

"Will you do, on a certain occasion, what I tell you?"

"It would be a sacrilege not to obey you, Leona, for you would come as God's messenger."

"That is all I had to say to you, my dear Emmanuel. Let us return now."

"Poor child!" murmured the duke, "it is not astonishing that you are so pale, having received the kiss of the dead!"

The next day, on arriving at the castle of Verceil, Emmanuel Philibert found Scianca-Ferro waiting for him.

The brave squire had entered, the evening before, into the grand court just when three o'clock was striking; he brought a letter from the duchess!

XIX

THE DEAD KNOW EVERYTHING

THE letter of the Princess Marguerite was accompanied by a sum of three hundred thousand crowns.

Maréchal de Bourdillon, who, without doubt, was acting according to the secret orders he received from the Duc de Guise, refused to withdraw his garrisons, unless the men received their arrears of pay. Seeing that the French did not evacuate Piedmont as quickly as they were bound to do, Emmanuel Philibert wrote a letter to his nephew. King François II., prompted by the Guises, replied that the soldiers would not abandon Piedmont until they received a sum of a hundred thousand crowns due to them.

"Now," said the good Princess Marguerite, "as it is indisputable that France, and not you, should pay French soldiers, I send you, my beloved master and lord, this sum of one hundred thousand crowns, the value of my jewels, most of which were gifts to me from my father, François I., when I was a young girl.

"And thus," she added, "it is France that pays, and not you."

The French troops were therefore paid, and the only garrisons remaining were those in the reserved cities: Turin, Chivas, Chieri, and Villeneuve d'Asti.

Then Emmanuel returned to Nice with Scianca-Ferro, who did not stay there any time, but returned to Paris, to resume his post near the Duchess Marguerite.

The princess was not to enter the states of her husband until all trace of disorder was effaced.

Perhaps his love for Leona rendered the duke a little ungrateful. Certainly, he did not exhibit the eagerness to see again that excellent princess which her merits deserved.

He devoted all his efforts to the complete reorganization of his country, and began by dealing fittingly with the ingratitude or forgetfulness shown by one portion of his subjects, and the loyalty that distinguished another.

A large number of his subjects had thrown themselves into the French party; a smaller number had held aloof, remaining passively faithful to the duke; finally, others had been constant to him in evil fortune, and had taken an active part in his interests. He advanced the latter to positions of honor and influence; he forgave the second class their weakness, and even did them favors when the opportunity presented itself; as to the first, he did them neither good nor evil, but excluded them from all participation in public affairs, saying—

"I have no reason for trusting them in my prosperity, when they abandoned me in my misfortunes."

Then he remembered that the peasants of Oleggio had asked for magistrates who would render them justice instead of selling it; he therefore placed at the head of the judiciary order Thomas of Langusque, Count of Stropiane, a magistrate celebrated for his integrity and profound knowledge of the laws.

Moreover, two senates replaced the old councils of justice and the parliaments established by the French occupation. Now, on the western slope of the Alps was born the proverb, "God preserve us from the equity of the parliament!" and this proverb—as Hannibal and Charlemagne had done, and as Napoleon was to do—had passed from the Western Alps to the Eastern Alps.

It took a longer time to establish peace than justice.

We have spoken of the two causes of war: a war territorial and a war religious, which existed in the very bosom of Savoy.

A *territorial war* with the Swiss Confederation, which

had taken possession of the Pays de Vaud, the Comté du Romont, Gex, and Le Chablais.

Emmanuel Philibert consented to surrender to the Bernese all the right bank of Lake Leman, on condition that Le Chablais, Gex, and the bailiwicks of Ternier and Gaillard should be restored.

Peace was made on these terms.

A *religious war* with the reformers of the valleys of Pragelas, Lucerne, and Saint-Martin.

We have said that by allying themselves with the Calvinists of Geneva and the Lutherans of Germany these schismatics had become a power.

Emmanuel Philibert sent against them the bastard of Achaia.

The latter penetrated into the valleys with an army of four or five thousand men: it was thought sufficient for the reduction of a population unskilled in arms and with no other weapons of defence except its implements of tillage; but everything becomes a weapon in the hands of him who truly wishes to fight for the twofold liberty of soul and body. The men hid their old men and wives and children in caverns known only to themselves alone; they had received considerable quantities of powder from their co-religionists of Geneva. Along all the routes which the Catholics were to follow, the rocks were mined; hardly were the invaders engaged in the defiles, when they heard above their heads the rumbling of a thunder more terrible than that of heaven, a bolt that fell with each lightning flash. The mountains trembled under these detonations; the rocks, suddenly torn from their bases, seemed first to mount to the clouds, then fell back entire, or in fragments, rolled along the slopes of the mountains like avalanches of granite, and struck men who, when they sought for their adversaries, saw only frightened eagles hovering in the sky.

This war lasted nearly a year.

In fine, Vaudois and Catholics, worn out, came to terms of peace. Perhaps, too, Emmanuel Philibert wished only

to give a pledge of his desire to exterminate heresy to the Guises, who were governing France, constructing stakes on the Grève, and preparing for Saint-Bartholomew, and to Philip II., who was governing Spain, and erecting scaffolds in Brussels, Antwerp, and Ghent.

The result of the conferences was that the Vaudois expelled their most turbulent *barbas*—it was the name the Vaudois gave to their priests, on account of the long beards they wore—and, these being sent away, the inhabitants had the right to hold their worship in the places where from time immemorial they had held it.

Only, as a Catholic population also existed in the valley, and, although smaller in number, had a right to liberty of worship, two villages were designated in each valley, in which Mass could be celebrated.

The Vaudois pastors bade farewell to their families, and, in order not to excite a disturbance among their flocks, if it were seen that they were exiles, they departed under the garb of muleteers and shepherds.

After their departure, Emmanuel erected, at the entrance to the valleys, the strong forts of Peyrouse, Villars, and La Tour.

There being universal peace throughout his duchy, he wrote to the duchess to meet him at Nice; then, as it was the 12th of November, of the year 1560, he set out for his castle of Verceil.

On the morning of the 17th he was at Oleggio.

It was the second anniversary of his visit to Leona since his marriage.

Leona awaited him, as the first year, on the threshold of her little house.

There was, in these two hearts, in this chaste love, such a communion of thoughts that Emmanuel had no idea of missing the rendezvous, and Leona had no idea of Emmanuel missing it.

As soon as Emmanuel perceived Leona, he spurred his horse to a gallop, happy to see her again, trembling at

seeing her look paler and nearer the tomb than the last time.

It might have been said that Leona foresaw the impression her face would make on her lover: her face was covered by a veil.

Emmanuel shuddered at sight of her: she looked like that veiled shadow whose appearance she had recounted on his last visit.

He lifted the veil with a trembling hand, and two tears silently coursed down his cheeks.

Leona's skin had the whiteness of Parian marble; her look seemed a flame ready to be extinguished, her voice a breath ready to expire. She was evidently making an effort to live.

A slight blush passed over the cheeks of the young woman on seeing her lover. Her heart was always living, and every beat of it said, "I love you!"

A collation was ready, but Leona did not taste it; she seemed already a stranger to the needs and weaknesses of this world.

After breakfast she took the arm of Emmanuel, and both took the same walk through the village which they had taken the year before.

This time there was no sign of those groups of anxious peasants, eagerly questioning one another on the virtues or defects of their duke; a year had elapsed, and that year had made him known. Except the war in the three valleys, which had no echo beyond, peace had done its maternal work: the French garrisons left the towns they had been ruining for twenty years; justice was impartially rendered to great and small. So all were at their several occupations—the laborers in the fields, the artisans in the workshops.

The people blessed the duke, and had only one wish; namely, that the Princess Marguerite should give an heir to the throne of Savoy.

Every time this wish was expressed in presence of the two travellers, Emmanuel started and regarded Leona.

Leona smiled, and answered for the duke.

"God, who has restored to us our beloved sovereign, will not abandon Savoy!"

At the end of the village Leona took the road she had taken the preceding year; and, after a walk of a quarter of an hour, both found themselves in front of a little chapel, built on the spot where the duke had, a year before, planted a branch of willow, and where the unknown bird had sung his marvellous song.

It was one of those little chapels of the sixteenth century, so elegant in structure, so slender in form; it was entirely constructed of that charming rose granite which the mountains of the Ticino furnish. In a gilded niche, a Virgin of silver presented to the passers-by her divine Son, who blessed them with extended hand.

Emmanuel, pious as a crusading knight, knelt, and said a prayer. While it lasted Leona stood near him, her hand resting on his head; then, when he had finished—

"My beloved duke," said she, "you have promised me, you have even sworn, a year ago, that if, on your return to the castle of Verceil, you met Scianca-Ferro, bearing a letter from the Duchess Marguerite, you would henceforth believe all I said to you, however strange my words might appear, and that you would follow my advice, however mysterious it might be."

"Yes, so I promised," said the duke; "rest assured, I remember it well."

"Was Scianca-Ferro at Verceil?"

"He was."

"Did he arrive at the hour I said?"

"At three exactly he entered the court."

"Was he the bearer of a letter from the Princess Marguerite?"

"The letter was the first thing he handed me when he saw me."

"You are ready to follow my counsel without discussing it?"

"I believe, my Leona, when you speak to me, that it is the Virgin herself, whose image I have just venerated, who speaks to me through your lips."

"Well, listen then. I have seen my mother again."

Emmanuel started as he had done a year before, when Leona had pronounced the same words.

"And when?" he asked.

"Last night."

"And—what did she say to you?" said Emmanuel, beginning to doubt in spite of himself.

"Come, come," said Leona, smiling, "you are still doubting!"

"No," said the duke.

"This time, then, I shall begin with the proof."

Emmanuel listened.

"Before starting for Verceil you wrote to the princess to meet you at Nice, did you not?"

"It is true," said Emmanuel, with astonishment.

"You told her in your letter that you would be waiting for her at Nice, where she would arrive by sea from Marseilles?"

"You know that?" asked the duke.

"You added that you would conduct her from Nice to Genoa, following the sea-coast by San Remo and Albenga?"

"Good heavens!" murmured Emmanuel.

"Then, from there, you would conduct her through the beautiful valley of the Bormida, by Cherasco and Asti, to Turin?"

"It is true, Leona! But no one except myself knew the contents of this letter, and it was confided to a courier on whom I can depend—"

Leona smiled.

"Did I not tell you that this night I have seen my mother?"

"Well?"

"The dead know everything, Emmanuel."

The duke, a prey to involuntary terror, passed his

handkerchief across his forehead, which was covered with perspiration.

"It is necessary to believe you!" he murmured. "What said she?"

"Well, my dear Emmanuel, this is what my mother said: 'To-morrow you will see the duke; you will make him promise to start, during the night, with the Duchess Marguerite, by Tenda and Coni, while Scianca-Ferro follows the line along the coast with an empty litter and an escort of a hundred well-armed men.'"

Emmanuel looked at Leona questioningly.

"'The salvation of Savoy is at stake!' is what my mother said to me, Emmanuel, and this is what I now say to you, Emmanuel: you have promised, you have done more than promise, you have sworn to follow my advice; swear to me, then, that you will pass with the duchess by Tenda and Coni, while Scianca-Ferro, with an empty litter and a hundred well-armed men, follows the line along the coast."

The duke hesitated a moment: his reason as a man, his pride as a soldier, were fighting against the promise made, the pledge given.

"Emmanuel," murmured Leona, with a melancholy shake of the head, "who knows? Perhaps it is the last thing I shall ask of you!"

Emmanuel stretched his hand toward the chapel, and swore.

XX

THE ROUTE FROM SAN REMO TO ALBENGA

EMMANUEL PHILIBERT had appointed Nice as the place where the Duchess Marguerite was to meet him, for two reasons: first, in order to reward his faithful city with a fresh mark of his favor; and next, as the journey was to be made in winter, he wished to show her his duchy with its smiling face, with its eternal springtime of Nice and Oneglia.

Duchess Marguerite arrived on the 15th of February, and landed in the port of Villa-Franca: she had been delayed long by the festivals given in her honor at Marseilles; Marseilles had fêted her, both as the aunt of Charles IX., then reigning, and as Duchess of Savoy, and the old Phocian city had rendered her a thousand honors in both capacities.

The duke and duchess remained four months at Nice.

The duke employed this time in hastening the construction of the galleys he had ordered. A Calabrian corsair, named Occhiati, a renegade Christian who had turned Mussulman, had made descents on Corsica and the coast of Tuscany. It was even stated that a hostile vessel had been seen in the waters of the river of Genoa.

At last, toward the beginning of March, with the first zephyrs of that tepid Italian spring that caresses wearied bosoms so gently, Emmanuel decided to set out.

The itinerary of the journey was known beforehand; the royal *cortège* followed what was called the river of Genoa; that is to say, the line of the sea-coast. The duke and

duchess—the duke on horseback, the duchess in a litter—were to pass by San Remo and Albenga, and relays of horses were prepared in advance.

The departure was fixed for the 15th of March.

At daybreak, the *cortège* filed out of the castle of Nice, the duke on horseback, as we have said, with visor lowered, and armed as if for battle, rode beside the litter, the curtains of which were drawn.

Fifty armed men marched in front and fifty behind.

The first night they halted at San Remo.

At an early hour on the following day, they resumed their march.

They stopped at Oneglia for breakfast; but the duchess did not wish to descend from her litter, and the duke himself carried her bread, wine, and fruit.

The duke ate without unarming, only raising the visor of his casque.

About noon the cavalcade and litter departed.

A little beyond Porto Maurisio, the road narrows between two mountains; you lose sight of the sea, and you find yourself in a narrow defile bristling with rocks on the right and left. If ever there was a fitting place for an ambuscade, surely it was this.

The duke sent twenty men in advance—an unnecessary precaution; for in these times of peace, what was there to fear?

The twenty men passed on without being troubled.

But the moment the duke, who always kept near the litter, found himself in the defile, a terrible arquebusade resounded, directed especially against the duke and the litter; the horse of the duke was wounded, one of the horses of the litter fell dead, and a feeble cry was heard through the curtains.

At the same time there were savage cries, and the escort was assailed by a band of men in Moorish costume.

It had fallen into an ambuscade of pirates.

The duke was running to the litter, when one of the

assailants, a man mounted on a magnificent Arabian steed, and covered from head to foot in Turkish mail, rushed upon him, crying—

"Turn, Duke Emmanuel! you shall not escape me this time."

"Nor you me either," replied the duke.

Then, rising on his spurs, and raising his sword above his head—

"Do your best," he cried to his soldiers; "I am going to try to show you an example."

And then there was a general *mêlée*, which, however, we shall turn aside from to follow the struggle of the two leaders.

The skill of Emmanuel in the terrible game of war was known to be almost irresistible; but now he had found an enemy worthy of him.

First, each of the adversaries discharged a pistol with the left hand, the balls of which glanced one from the armor of the duke and flattened the other against that of the pirate.

Then the combat, of which this discharge was but the prelude, continued with the sword.

Although armed after the Turkish fashion for defence, the corsair bore, as offensive weapons, a long straight sword in his hand, and had a battle-axe with limber handle and keen blade at his saddle-bow. These axes, the handle of which were made of rhinoceros hide, furnished with little steel blades, had from their very flexibility a terrible force.

The duke had his sword and battle-mace; they were, it will be remembered, his customary weapons; both were equally formidable in his hands.

Some soldiers were running to his help; but he ordered them away, saying—

"Act on your own account; with God's help, I shall on mine!"

And with God's help he indeed did wonders.

It was evident the pirates had not expected to find so strong an escort, and that their chief—who had attacked the duke—had hoped to find him more unprepared and less completely armed; nevertheless, although disappointed, he did not give way an inch.

It was clearly seen that, in the terrible blows he dealt, there was a hatred still more terrible; but finely tempered through the pirate's sword was, it had but little effect on the armor of the duke, and the sword of the duke made just as little impression on the Damascus coat of mail of his antagonist.

In the midst of this furious struggle, the horse of the duke was wounded, and he felt it sink under him. He collected all his strength for one supreme stroke; the sword flamed in his hands. The pirate understood that a terrible blow was about to smite him. He threw himself backward, and in doing so made the horse rear.

It was the horse which received the stroke. This time the *chanfrein* of the horse, of less pure steel than the armor of its rider, was cloven; and the horse, struck between the two ears, fell on its knees.

The Moor believed his horse slain; he leaped to the ground at the moment when the duke's own horse fell.

The two adversaries were then on their feet at the same time.

Each ran to his horse's saddle—the one to seize his battle-axe, the other his mace.

Then, as if they judged the weapons they had taken sufficiently murderous for their purpose, the two combatants flung away their swords, and the pirate remained armed with his axe, the duke with his mace.

Never did Cyclops, forging in the caverns of Etna the thunderbolt of Jupiter on the anvil of Vulcan, deal such doughty blows. It seemed as if death himself, monarch of the ensanguined battle-plain, had for a moment arrested his flight, and was hovering above these two men, certain

to bear away in his arms that one of them who was surely to sleep his last sleep.

At the end of an instant, the duke appeared to have the vantage. The axe of his antagonist carried off a piece of the crown of his casque; but it was evident that the steel points of the mace had pierced the armor of his enemy, inflicting terrible wounds.

Then while the strength of the duke seemed inexhaustible, the Moor was evidently losing his: his hissing respiration was passing visibly through the openings in his helmet; his blows grew less rapid and less vigorous; his arm, if not his hatred, was weakening. But, with every blow he struck, the duke seemed to gain new energy.

The pirate began to recoil—step by step, insensibly—but he recoiled. His retreat led him to the border of a precipice; only, his mind being engrossed with parrying blows or dealing them, he appeared to perceive that he was insensibly approaching an abyss.

Both, the one retreating, the other pursuing, arrived thus on the ledge overhanging the precipice; two steps further, and the pirate had no longer a foothold.

But undoubtedly this was what he wished; for suddenly he flung his axe from him, and, seizing his adversary by the waist, cried—

"Ah, Duke Emmanuel, I have you at last! We shall die together!"

And with a convulsive effort fit to uproot an oak he lifted his enemy in his arms.

But a terrible burst of laughter answered him.

"I recognized you, bastard of Waldeck," he added, "and you shall not have the honor of dying by his hand."

"Scianca-Ferro!" exclaimed the bastard of Waldeck. "Curses upon thee and thy duke!"

And he stooped down to pick up the axe, and renew the struggle; but during this movement, rapid though it was, the mace of Scianca-Ferro, weighty as the rock upon which both stood, fell on the back of the renegade's head.

The bastard of Waldeck heaved a sigh, and lay prostrate and motionless.

"Ah!" cried Scianca-Ferro, "brother Emmanuel, you are no longer here to hinder me from crushing this viper!"

And as he had lost his dagger during the combat, he lifted up a mass of rock, with the strength of one of those Titans who piled Pelion on Ossa, and with it crushed the casque and head of his enemy.

Then, with a burst of laughter more terrible still than the first one—

"What specially pleases me in thy death, bastard of Waldeck, is that, dying in the armor of the infidel, thou art damned like a dog!"

Then, remembering the sigh he had heard issue from the litter, he ran up to it, and drew the curtains apart.

The pirates were flying in all directions.

During all this time, Emmanuel and the Princess Marguerite were tranquilly following the route of Tenda and Coni. They had reached the latter city nearly at the very hour when the terrible combat we have just related was taking place between San Remo and Albenga.

Duke Emmanuel was anxious.

What reason had Leona for insisting on this change of route? What danger did he run by following that of the river of Genoa? And if there was peril, must not that peril have fallen on Scianca-Ferro? Who had informed Scianca-Ferro of the promise made by him, Emmanuel, to Leona? And how did it happen that at the very moment he was about to speak to Scianca-Ferro of the change of route, the latter should come to him and speak of it first?

The supper was sad. Princess Marguerite was fatigued; on his part, Emmanuel Philibert pretended he was in need of rest, and retired to his chamber at ten. It seemed to him as if every moment some messenger of bad news must arrive.

He ordered two men to watch, one at the door, the

other at the antechamber, in order that he might be wakened at any hour of the night and informed if anything occurred.

It struck eleven; Emmanuel opened his window. The sky was covered with stars, the air balmy and pure; a bird was singing in a pomegranate bush, and it seemed to the duke as if it was the same bird he had heard singing at Oleggio. At the end of half an hour, he shut the window, and leaned his elbows on a table covered with papers.

Gradually his eyes clouded, his eyelids grew heavy; he heard the first vibrations of midnight vaguely hum in his ears. Then it seemed, as through a mist, he saw the door of his chamber open, and something advance which resembled a shadow.

The shadow approached, and bending over him, murmured his name.

At the same moment an icy impress on his brow sent a shudder through his whole body; this pressure broke the invisible bonds which enchained him.

"Leona! Leona!" he cried.

It was indeed Leona who was beside him, but this time, her lips did not breathe, her eyes had no light; a few drops of pale blood fell from a wound she had received in her breast.

"Leona! Leona!" repeated the duke.

And he stretched his arms to seize the phantom; but the latter made a sign, and the prince's arms fell back.

"I told thee, my beloved Emmanuel," murmured the apparition, in a voice sweet as a perfumed zephyr, "that I should be nearer to thee dead than living!"

"Why did you leave me, Leona?" asked Emmanuel, feeling his heart melt in sobs.

"Because my mission on earth was accomplished, my beloved duke," replied the shade; "but before I return to heaven, God permits me to tell you that the wish of your subjects is accomplished."

"Which one?"

"The Princess Marguerite is with child, and you shall have a son."

"Leona! Leona!" cried the prince, "who has revealed to thee this mystery of maternity?"

"The dead know everything!" murmured Leona.

And, as the body faded away into mist, a voice almost unintelligible said—

"Our next meeting will be in heaven, my beloved!"

And the phantom disappeared.

The duke, who had been chained to his chair while the phantom was near him, rose and ran to the door.

The servant on guard had seen no one enter or leave.

"Leona! Leona!" cried Emmanuel, "shall I see you again?"

And it seemed to him as if a breathing in his ear hardly perceptible to the senses whispered—

"Yes."

The next day the duke, instead of continuing his journey, stopped at Coni; he thought he should surely receive news there.

And, in fact, about two o'clock, Scianca-Ferro arrived.

"Is Leona dead?" were the first words which Emmanuel said to him.

"Yes. But how do you know?" replied Scianca-Ferro.

"Of a wound in the breast?" continued Emmanuel.

"Of a ball destined for the duchess," said Scianca-Ferro.

"And who was the miserable assassin," cried the duke, "who attempted to take the life of a woman?"

"The bastard of Waldeck," replied Scianca-Ferro.

"Oh!" said the duke, "may he never fall into my hands!"

"I swore to you, Emmanuel, that the first time he ever fell into my hands I should crush him—"

"Well?"

"I have crushed him—"

"Then all that is left for us is to pray for Leona!" said Emmanuel Philibert.

"It is not for us to pray for angels," answered Scianca-Ferro; "it is for angels to pray for us."

On the 12th of January, 1562, as Leona had predicted, Princess Marguerite was happily delivered, at the castle of Rivoli, of a son, who received the names of Charles Emmanuel, and reigned fifty years.

Three months after the birth of the young prince, the French, according to the terms of the convention of Chateau-Cambrésis, evacuated Turin, Chieri, Chivas, and Villeneuve-d'Asti, as they had already evacuated the rest of Piedmont.

EPILOGUE

ONE fine morning at the beginning of September, 1580—that is to say, about twenty years after the events we have just related—a score of those gentlemen who were called the Ordinaries of King Henri III., and whose total number was forty-five, were waiting, in the grand court of the Louvre, for the hour when the king, on passing through it to Mass, would take them to perform their devotions, whether they were willing or not; for one of the manias of King Henri was to trouble himself, not only about the care of his own soul, but the souls of others as well. And just as Louis XIV. was to say, fifty years later, "Come and bore yourselves with me," to his favorites, so Henri III. used to say, "Come and save yourselves with me," to his minions.

The life led by the Ordinaries, or the Forty-five, of his Majesty—they were called indifferently by both names—was anything but amusing; the rule of the Louvre was almost as severe as that of a convent, and the king, pointing to the death of Saint-Mégrin, Bussy-d'Amboise, and two or three other gentlemen, a death caused by their exaggerated love for the fair sex, used to take these as a text from which he thundered against women, and represented them as inferior and even dangerous beings.

The poor young gentlemen were then forced—if they wished to stand in the good graces of the king—to find all their recreation in practicing arms, playing football, shooting sparrows with air-guns, curling their hair, inventing new kinds of collars, saying their beads, and scourging

themselves, if, in the middle of this innocent life, the devil, who does not respect even the saints, came to tempt them.

This being understood, it will not be a matter of surprise that, on seeing an old fellow with one leg, one arm, and one eye, asking alms of a light-horseman stationed at the door of the Louvre, one of the Forty-five should make him a sign to enter, and after giving him a coin and putting him a few questions, should have called his comrades at once, with that innocent passion for gossip found equally among the students shut within the walls of a college, the nuns in their convent, and the soldiers in a fortress.

The young people ran up, and, surrrounding the newcomer, made him the object of a profound examination.

Let us hasten to say that the person who had the honor of attracting such general attention well deserved the trouble of examining him.

He was a man about sixty, who, for that matter, did not appear of any certain age, seeing the strange physical condition to which his campaigns had reduced him, and the adventurous life he seemed to have led.

Besides the eye, arm, and leg which were wanting to him, his face was hacked with sabre-cuts, his fingers shattered with pistol-shots, and his head mended in several places with tin plates.

His nose was so covered with cuts and thrusts and scars of all sorts that it resembled one of those baker's tallies, on which a notch is made for every loaf sold on credit.

Such an exhibition was, it will be acknowledged, a curious one for young people, who, in default of sweeter amusements, found a great attraction in duelling.

So questions rained on the mendicant, thick as hail. "What's your name?"—"How old are you?"—"What tavern did you lose your eye in?"—"In what ambuscade did you leave your arm?"—"On what field of battle did you forget your leg?"

"Come, now, gentlemen," said one of the inquirers, "let

us have some order in our questions, or the poor devil will never be able to answer us."

"But we should first find out whether he has lost his tongue also."

"No, thank God, my noble lords, I have kept my tongue still! and if you will be gracious to an old captain of adventures, I will employ it in singing your praises."

"A captain of adventures, you? Go to!" said one of the young people. "Do you think you shall ever make us believe you were a captain of adventures?"

"It was at least the title given me more than once by Duc François de Guise, whom I helped to take Calais, by Amiral de Coligny, whom I aided in defending Saint-Quentin, and by the Prince de Condé, whom I aided in entering Orléans."

"You have seen these illustrious captains?" asked one of the gentlemen.

"I have seen and spoken to them, and they have spoken to me. Ah! you are brave, gentlemen, I have no doubt of it; but let me tell you that the race of the valiant and the strong has departed!"

"And you are the last?" retorted a voice.

"Not of those whom I mentioned," returned the mendicant; "but the last, in fact, of an association of braves. We were ten adventurers, look you, my gentlemen, with whom a captain might attempt anything; but death has taken us one by one, and has carried us off in detail."

"And what were, I shall not say the adventures, but the names of the adventurers?" said one of the Ordinaries.

"You are right not to ask their adventures: their adventures alone would make a poem, and he who could write it, poor Fracasso, has unfortunately died of a contraction of the throat; but, as to names, that is another thing."

"Well, then, the names?"

"There was Dominico Ferrante: he was the first to go.

One evening, passing with two companions close by the Tour de Nesle, he took the idea into his head of offering to a devil of a Florentine sculptor his help in carrying a bag of money which the latter had just received from the treasurer of François I. Benvenuto, who was late, and thought he heard the clock of Saint-Germain-aux-Près striking twelve, mistook this polite offer for an evidence cupidity, whipped out his sword, and by a rapid movement pinned my poor Ferrante to the wall."

"That's what comes of being obliging," said one of the auditors to another.

"The second was Vittorio Albani Fracasso—a great poet who could work only by moonlight. One evening that he was searching for a rhyme in the neighborhood of Saint-Quentin, he fell, by chance, into an ambuscade prepared for Prince Emmanuel Philibert. He was so engrossed by his pursuit of this rhyme that he forgot to ask the ambuscaders why they were there; so that Duke Emmanuel having come in the meanwhile, Fracasso found himself in the middle of the hubbub; he was doing his best to get out of it when he was felled by a mace in the hands of the duke's squire—a terrible fellow, named Scianca-Ferro. Now, the ambuscade failed, but Fracasso remained on the field of battle; and as, from the state he was in, he could not explain how he came there, they tied a cord round his neck and hoisted him to the branch of an oak! Although poor Fracasso, as became a poet, was as thin as a snipe, the weight of the body, for all that, contracted the knot, and the contraction of the knot contracted the gullet. It was the very moment when he wanted to give such explanations as might clear his honor, which was seriously compromised; but he had revived a second too late. The explanations could not pass down along the cord, and remained at the other end of the running knot; and this gave the impression that the poor innocent had been justly hanged."

"Gentlemen," said a voice, "five *Paters* and five *Aves* for the unfortunate Fracasso!"

"The third," continued the mendicant, "was a worthy German adventurer, named Franz Scharfenstein. You have certainly heard of the late Briareus and the defunct Hercules? Well, Franz had the strength of Hercules and the stature of Briareus. He was killed bravely on the breach of Saint-Quentin. God rest his soul and that of his uncle Heinrich, who died an idiot, through excessive weeping!"

"Say, Montaigu," interrupted a voice, "do you think, if you were to die, would your uncle become an idiot through excessive weeping?"

"My dear," replied the person addressed, "there is an axiom of law which says: *non bis in idem.*"

"The fifth," continued the mendicant, "was a brave Catholic, named Cyrille Népomucène Lactance. He is sure of his salvation; for, after combating twenty years for our holy religion, he died a martyr."

"A martyr! *peste!* tell us about that."

"It is a simple story, my lords. He served under the orders of the famous Baron des Adrets, who at that moment was a Catholic. Of course you must know that the Baron des Adrets spent his life in changing from Catholic to Protestant, and from Protestant to Catholic. He was a Catholic for the time; and Lactance was serving under his orders when the baron having made some Huguenots prisoners on the eve of Corpus Christi, and not knowing what kind of death to inflict on them, Lactance had a holy inspiration. He advised that they be flayed alive, and the houses in the little village of Mornas be hung with their skins instead of tapestry; the baron was delighted with the advice, and put it into execution the next day, to the great glory of our holy religion! But it happened that the baron became a Protestant in the following year, and Lactance falling into his hands, the baron remembered the pious advice he had given him, and, in spite of his protests, had him flayed in his turn! I recognized the martyr's skin by a mole he had above the left shoulder."

"Perhaps the same thing will happen to you one day,

Villequier," said one of the young people to his neighbor; "but, if they skin you, it will not be in order to make a hanging of your hide, else, *mordieu!* there will surely be a profusion of drums in France!"

"The sixth," resumed the adventurer, "was a pretty dandy of our good city of Paris, young, beautiful, gallant, always running after the women—"

"Hush!" interrupted one of the Ordinaries; "do not speak so loud, good man; King Henri III. might hear you, and have you punished for living in such bad company!"

"And what was the name of the rascal whose morals were so very bad?" inquired another.

"Victor Felix Yvonnet. One day, or rather one night, that he happened to be with one of his mistresses, the husband had not the courage to meet him bravely and attack him, sword in hand. He unhinged the door by which Yvonnet was to leave—a massive oak door, weighing three thousand pounds perhaps!—and placed it in equilibrium on its hinges; at three in the morning Yvonnet bade adieu to his love, and went away to the door of which he had the key. He introduced the key into the lock, turned it round twice, and pulled it; but, instead of turning on its hinges, it fell heavily on poor Yvonnet! If it had been Franz or Heinrich Scharfenstein, they would have shook it off like a sheet of paper; but Yvonnet was, as I have told you, a dandy, a Cupid, with little hands and little feet; the door broke his loins, and the next day he was found dead!"

"Stay," said the one of the Forty-Five who was named Montaigu, "we have now a receipt to give to M. de Chateauneuf; it will not prevent him from being deceived, but it will prevent him from being deceived twice by the same person."

"The seventh," continued the mendicant, "was named Martin Pilletrousse. He was what M. de Brantome would call an honest gentleman, and perished through an unfortunate misunderstanding. One day M. de Montluc, who was

passing through a little town, was complimented by all the magistrates except the judges; he determined to exact satisfaction for this incivility; he learned that twelve Huguenots were to be tried on the next day. It was all he wished to know; he went to the prison, and, entering the common hall, asked, 'Is there any Huguenot here?' Now, Pilletrousse, who had known M. de Montluc when he was a furious Huguenot, and was unaware that, like Baron des Adrets, he had changed his religion, happened to be in that hall, accused of some wretched trifle or other; he thought M. de Montluc asked for the Huguenots in order to free them. Not at all; it was in order to have them hanged! When poor Pilletrousse saw how matters were, he protested with all his might; but it was all in vain; they took him at his first word, and he was hanged high and quick, the 12th! The next day, who were caught in a trap? The judges, who had no longer any one to try. But, meanwhile, poor Pilletrousse was dead."

"*Requiescat in pace!*" said one of the listeners.

"It is a Christian wish, my young gentleman," replied the mendicant, "and I thank you in the name of my friend."

"Now for the eighth," said a voice.

"The eighth was named Jean Chrysostome Procope; he was from Lower Normandy—"

"The king, gentlemen! the king!" cried a voice.

"Come, draw back, you rascal!" said the young lords, "and try not to find yourself in the way of his Majesty, who cares only for handsome faces and graceful figures."

It was, in truth, the king who was descending from his apartments, having M. de Guise on his right, and M. de Lorraine on his left. He seemed very melancholy.

"Gentlemen," said he to the courtiers who lined his passage, hiding as best they could the man who was minus an eye, a leg, and an arm, "you have often heard me speak of the truly royal manner in which I was received in Piedmont by Duke Emmanuel Philibert of Savoy?"

The young noblemen inclined, in sign that they remembered.

"Well, I have received this morning the painful tidings of his death, which took place in Turin on the 30th of August, 1580."

"And, no doubt, sire," asked one of the Forty-five, "this great prince has died a fine death?"

"A death worthy of him, gentlemen; he died in the arms of his son, saying to him: 'My son, learn from my death what ought to be your life, and from my life what ought to be your death. Your age renders you capable of governing the states which I leave you; be careful to preserve them for your posterity, and rest assured that God will watch over them as long as you live in fear of Him!' Gentlemen, Duke Emmanuel Philibert was one of my friends; I shall wear mourning for him during eight days, and during eight days I will hear Mass for his intention. He who does the same will do me a pleasure."

And the king continued his way to the chapel; the gentlemen followed, and heard Mass religiously with him.

After leaving the church the first thing they looked for was the beggar; but he had disappeared. At the same time disappeared with him the purse of Sainte-Maline, the comfit-box of Montaigu, and the gold chain of Villequier.

The adventurer had only one hand, but, as we see, he knew how to use it.

The three young people wished to learn if he made as good use of his only leg as of his unmated hand, and ran to the door to find from the sentinel what had become of the lame mendicant with whom they had been talking half an hour before.

"Gentlemen," said the light-horseman, "he vanished behind the Hotel de Petit Bourbon, but, when leaving, he said very politely: 'My gentleman, it may be the noble lords with whom I have just had the honor of conversing may desire to know the end of my last two companions, and also the name of the poor devil who has survived them.

My two companions were named Procope and Maldent; one was a Norman and the other a Picard, and both were very adroit. The first died attorney to the Chatelet; the second, a doctor of the Sorbonne. As for myself, my name is César Annibal Malemort, very much at their service, if I was fit for it.' "

These were the only tidings of the last of the adventurers that reached the Forty-five or that have come down to us.

Chance decreed that the one who ought to have been the first to succumb had miraculously survived them all.

"THE PAGE OF THE DUKE OF SAVOY"

END OF PART TWO

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